

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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## JOHN MAXWELL'S MARRIAGE.

### CHAPTER XIII.

JACK stood in the library at Douros, waiting for Mr. Nesbit to return. He was white faced and heavy-eyed ; but, since he had risen and dressed, the dull ache in his head did not hinder his brain from working. In that there was little comfort. It seemed to him as if he had risen from some ghastly nightmare, and found that he had dreamed true.

Memory served him bitterly well for the ride on his wedding morning, the arrival, then the agony of suspense, the scene in this very room, and what followed ; the leave-takings, the endless dinner, and the sense that he stood there naked to ridicule. Then a mist of wine spread over his recollection, but through it faces and gestures stood out with horrible distinctness ; he heard voices—his own voice too, or, as it were, a gross travesty of it. Things that he had said recurred, and as they came up in his mind, he set his teeth and drew in his breath savagely.

The mist thickened and thickened, and always the figure of himself seen through it seemed more alien and more contemptible ; the end was a mere blur—and then a gulf intervened. All these things came to him across a lapse of time, and they stung, like the recollection of some hideous fault, folly or indiscretion that raises a

flush and a spasm of shame when chance lifts it to the mind's surface. But their sting was like that also, somewhat deadened ; deadened and dulled by the keener bite of impressions that seemed to absorb his power to feel, to gather up all his consciousness into one agonising mass of shame and of remorse.

Between him and these newer memories—not memories, but present sensations—lay no mist of wine, shameful yet merciful. The hard light of morning was on them, and no soothing touch of sleep had yet passed over the throbbing nerves. They began with his awakening—the swimming stupor, and the sick heaviness, the bewilderment at unfamiliar surroundings ; then the sudden horrifying inrush of thought,—and there, in a turn of the head, thought's confirmation.

That white figure, crouched like a trapped beast in a chair by the window ; then the quick gasping cry of terror, shame, and revulsion as she felt his eyes on her, and drew herself together, cowering, huddling away with face averted. Would he ever forget the sound of it—all the abject and hopeless resentment of a proud creature's physical humiliation. And he—he knew himself for the agent of this indignity, this outrage, this crime : and he lay with a clouded brain, stupefied with remorse.

Then shamefacedly he had risen, and again she had shrunk and cried. "Do not fear, madam," he had said. He had dressed hastily, thinking to relieve her of his presence, and then, for a last touch, worse than tragedy, came the grotesque. They were locked in.

He had turned to her, in rage and shame, stammering excuses. Then at last she had risen and faced him, her cheeks blazing, her swollen eyes flaming; and she had found her tongue. Oh, she had whips to her hand in plenty; and every word that came was a lash on the very quick of his soul. The sight of her beauty only added to his remorse, magnified the misdeed. It was not in his nature to be passive under pain of any kind. Writhing under his shame and grief, he leaped to a desperate decision, and having seized it listened in silence. There had seemed a way of help, but when he spoke, the very word "reparation" had roused her to new fury. And when at last the servants had answered his summons, and opened the door, she had fled with a cry and a swift rush.

Still, whether she thanked him or cursed him for it, he held to his project. There would be opposition to meet, and he craved to meet it; he desired action in some shape, as a respite from the sense of his own degradation. That was why he had checked his first impulse to mount, ride and hide himself. This matter had to be settled with Mr. Nesbit, and vindictively he anticipated a struggle of wills.

But in the meantime Mr. Nesbit did not come. He had ridden out early, Jack learned, none knew why. And the young man chafed in the tension of awaiting him. Flinging himself into a chair, he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and then

he touched what in all these emotions he had forgotten—Mary's unread letter. With a laugh that was cruel to hear he drew it out. Mary—he had half forgotten Mary's existence. And yet Mary was the cause. He checked himself. Who was he to sit in judgement? If Mary had deceived him, he had done worse than Mary. They were in a sense confederates, each by wrong-doing compassing the destruction of a beautiful woman who had hurt neither of them. And indeed, if he had desired to make Mary rue her act, he had taken the fullest means to accomplish it. The consequences of his drunken madness recoiled on Mary and he began to pity her.

All this went through his mind in a flash: words are slow to tell of thought. But his face had softened somewhat before he began to read, and it changed strangely as he followed the letter. For here for the first time he learnt Mary's version of the story, and with that returned to him the conception of the Mary whom he had known.

It was a pathetic story enough, very simply told:—

DEAR JACK [it began], I cannot help calling you that, for you have always been kind to me, and I shall never forget your kindness, though you may think me hateful, and cruel, and deceitful. Only, I do not want you to think me worse than I am. On Sunday I did not know what was going to happen—you cannot think I did. I really meant every word that I said. I could not say that I loved you. That was because I knew I loved some one else, but I thought he had forgotten me. I know I ought never to have consented to marry you, but I could not resist my father and my mother; it was mostly for my mother's sake, Jack. Or else, I ought to have told you everything. But I could not, and I would not, for I was deceiving you and my mother too. And then I thought it was all over. And now I can only tell you when it is too late.

Then she told him briefly how Hugh McSwiney had won her affections two years before; how she had maintained a secret correspondence with him through old Bride Gallagher, and how she had written to him when Jack first proposed to her, and her father insisted that she should accept.

Jack ground his teeth as he realised how Mr. Nesbit had played upon him. That then was the reason of many things; the reason why he had been urged to go away, why he had been encouraged to propose a second time. He saw it all now—too late. The girl had been driven and forced. And, remembering the yesterday, he could realise how remorselessly driven, under smooth appearances. He went on reading—

And then, Jack, no letter came in answer to mine. I was foolish and I doubted. I thought he had forgotten. Only, I had promised that up to the very last day I would go to see if an answer came. And, Jack, you must try to understand. It was to ask for that answer I went to Carrig, but there was not the least little hope in my heart that I would find it. I was full of bitter anger, and it made me angrier to see you so kind to me, doing everything I wished, while the man whom I was ready to give up all for left me like that. I was thinking that all the time. And then, when you offered to take me across, I tried to refuse, but you insisted, and it all seemed so impossible that I let you. But while we were riding, things seemed to fall together so oddly, that they made me laugh with the pain of it, can you understand? But I ought never to have let you, and, Jack, I am punished now in the bitter shame. Only, believe me now. I cannot bear you to think I did it knowingly.

The young man's eyes softened. "Indeed, my dear," he said half aloud, "it is easier to believe in you than to disbelieve."

That is all [the letter ended]. Mr. McSwiney has come for me at the risk

of his life, and I am going with him. But I go with a sore heart. I need not talk of that, for you will understand. I ask your forgiveness, and I entreat you to believe me, and I will wish for your happiness wherever I am.

When Jack Maxwell had finished the reading of this letter—he read it with swelling eyes—he breathed a deep breath. It was as if a dear and healing hand, the woman's touch, had been laid upon his feverish forehead. From the distorted visions of wounded egotism he returned to the sane and generous perceptions of an open kindly nature. He saw the world as he had known it; a place of honour and of frailty, of pity and misfortune. He humiliated himself and was content to be humiliated. Mary's need for his forgiveness, though it blackened by comparison his own misdeed, nevertheless seemed to restore him to the human comity.

Youth for ever sees itself in a glass, and perhaps few of us ever wholly abandon that contemplation; but it is not given to later life to find youth's solace when the gesture is becoming. It meant much to Jack that he could forgive. Here at least was a thing that he might do, not in a hopeless struggle to repair the irreparable, but of a free heart, generously. Yet in fairness it should be said that he was restored to sanity not by any faint rehabilitation of himself in his own eyes, but by the restoration of another's cherished image.

His feeling for the girl when he was her accepted lover had been sincere and strong, but eminently youthful. He was in love with Mary, beyond a doubt, but, more than that, he was in love with love. And now to have lost her seemed to him a small thing since he had not lost love. In a sense he had found her again; after the nightmare hallucinations of the yesterday, she had reappeared in

her gentle perfection. He scarcely felt a personal loss, in the rejoicing that she at least had been spared. The romance of her story touched his imagination, and since one of the two must suffer, he was glad it should be himself. If one of them must be despicable, far better that she should be radiant. So long as he might paint her angelic, he was willing to heap on himself the worst names; as a man will find a kind of pleasure in condemning himself before the woman of whose loving judgement he is assured.

Moreover, his resolve was now tenfold strengthened: it was clear in his mind that Mary must approve what he had it in his mind to do. And not only that; the fuller his reparation, the less would be her need of self-reproach. She would never know that what he did was done with a thought of her; that added a touch of pleasure, of artistic finish to the whole. That he should do what he did was a matter of course; that he should go without the compensation of her gratitude was at least something of a sacrifice. In the contemplation of these fine schemes and sentiments the young man had almost lost the sense of present calamity, when Nesbit's entrance brought him back to crude realities. Shame rushed in upon him at the sight of those cold eyes, and with shame fierce resentment, vindictive desire.

Even Mr. Nesbit did not find it easy to look in the face of his partner in the day's doings; and it was with an assumed air of gaiety that he spoke as he came forward. "Well Jack, and how are you? I fear we made wild work yesterday among us. However, all's well that ends well, and I am proud to have you for my son-in-law."

"Are you proud of the means, sir?" asked the young man, ignoring the outstretched hand, and speaking

with a mouth that quivered and twitched from repressed anger.

Mr. Nesbit bit his lip. It was not his cue to quarrel, and he had foreseen reproaches. "Eh? Well, I suppose none of us can look back with pleasure; and if we did, we should see nothing distinctly. But I have no quarrel with the result. I should desire only to have done the same thing with more deliberation."

"And your daughter?" said Jack, with a savage emphasis in his intonation.

Mr. Nesbit made a gesture, half of deprecation, half of easy contempt. "My dear Jack, I trust you entirely to reconcile your wife to her good fortune. There is nothing difficult or unpleasant in the task. You have in this house the spectacle of a marriage not very dissimilar which has resulted in perfect happiness."

Scorn drew back the young man's lip and nostrils, and hardened his eyes. "Sir," he said, "we have all our own ideas of what is pleasant, what is decent, and so forth. Pleasant or unpleasant, this task is not to my mind. I refuse to undertake it." Then, losing his self-control, he broke out: "Do you suppose that I would live with a woman in whose eyes I must for ever appear a criminal, the author of her indignity?"

The pupils of Mr. Nesbit's eyes contracted, and his colour was slightly heightened. "I pass over your aspersions on myself, Jack," he answered in his level cutting tones. "We are perhaps not quite ourselves this morning. But I will ask you to observe that you are by your own desire legally married to my daughter."

"Oh, I make no doubt of that; legally as the master is owner of his slave," was the passionate retort.

The elder man surveyed him with a smile that was hard to bear.



"Pardon me, Jack," he said, "I have no taste for rhetoric, and your comparison is scarcely advantageous to my daughter. A marriage imposes duties, as I understand. And you will notice that if you are indeed the author of Isabella's misfortune, you are the more bound in honour to her."

Mr. Nesbit had miscalculated. He did not realise the change that these emotions had wrought in a young man hitherto so plastic in his hands, whom it was necessary to preserve in a state of ductility. For amid the confusion of the previous day the settlements had gone unsigned, and what could be arranged must be arranged by personal influence. Mr. Nesbit, as is common with other successful despots, underrated the possibility of opposition. He had never forecast such a spirit as now gleamed at him from the eyes facing him. Hatred he was accustomed to; but contempt troubled him. He remembered the ugly weapons that were in Jack's hand if he cared to use them; and he experienced a perplexity that was new to him, and disquieting.

"Sir," said Jack, all his features crisped with anger, and speaking with difficult utterance, "I desire to speak civilly. I do not attempt to throw aside the blame of this business. But I have acted hitherto under your influence, at your suggestion, and I find myself sunk in a morass of shame. Henceforward I will dispense with your judgement on matters touching honour."

Mr. Nesbit met him with the control of a skilled fencer. "An admirable conclusion. You begin by blaming no one; and you end by attributing the whole to my suggestion. Are you still of opinion that I arranged Mary's elopement?"

The young man's features were drawn hard with bitter hate as he answered, "Oh sir, you forget that I

have now a full view of your policy. Your daughter has explained it to me with a clearness that must strike into the dullest understanding. God in heaven," he went on, losing his self-control, "money, money, money, this contemptible wealth that has come to me is the whole of this history. I was a pawn in the game. Your daughter—it made no matter which daughter—was another. You pushed us as you chose, with your eye on this dirty mortgage. In your fear, your ignominious fear—that I might press upon you—on you, whom I took to be my friend—you forced me and this lady into this mockery of a marriage; you played on my drunkenness, on my vanity, on my pain. And to-day you talk to me of honour!"

In Mr. Nesbit's face, now impassive, a resolve was forming itself. Here was a new factor that he had not reckoned with—Isabella's exposure of his motives. But, as he listened to the fierce words, a thought flashed on him. He knew Jack's nature by heart, and he awaited the end with the patience of one certain of his stroke.

"So," he said, when the young man, ending, turned away in disdain. "So that is how you judge me. Have you not forgotten one circumstance? My daughter is your wife—you are my son-in-law. But in all other ways you are perfectly free. The settlements were not signed."

Jack fairly staggered under the blow. He felt that a point had been scored against him; that so far in the contest he stood defeated by this antagonist. The commanding part which he had assigned to himself slipped from him. "I had forgotten. I did not know," he stammered.

"Indeed?" said Mr. Nesbit. "Yet the circumstance was material. It will perhaps not be an undue exercise of suggestion if I ask you to bear it in mind."

Jack raged inwardly. In his mind was patent the consciousness of the truth, for Isabella's words had burnt it into him. Sullenly he appealed to them. "Your daughter, sir, gave me to understand that your motive was such as I have described."

"My daughter misrepresented me. I acted in haste under the influence of wine. But my object was to repair an injury that you had received from my family; and I expressed that to her."

"And my object, sir," said Jack with a return of spirit, "is to repair the injury done to your daughter."

"Which you propose to do by deserting her."

Jack's face flushed, but it was set. "I repeat, sir, that I have thought this matter out for myself, and cannot be guided by you."

Nesbit bowed ironically. "It will interest me vastly to learn what you propose to do."

"I propose, sir, to leave this country at once."

"Indeed? And to what place do you carry your wife?"

Before Jack rose the vision of Isabella's shrinking disgust, and involuntarily he shivered. "My wife," he returned, "will reside where she pleases. I shall not inflict my presence upon her."

"So," said Mr. Nesbit. "And how if I refuse to sanction this admirable arrangement?"

The young man's anger blazed into vehemence. "Once for all, sir, I refuse to allow you any voice in the matter. This cursed tangle is of your making; we must be free to shuffle out of it as best as we can, bruised and maimed and shamed. There is no power on earth that shall force me to live with a woman who has the right to reproach me as your daughter has done. I will strip myself to the last penny of the property that has

been the root of this evil, to compensate her so far as I can for what has been done; but I will go free, and will leave her free so far as may be."

There came a sudden gleam into Mr. Nesbit's eye; but he doubted his comprehension. "I do not understand your proposal," he said coldly, "beyond the fact that you mean to desert my daughter, who is your wife."

"I say, sir," Jack raged at him, "that I will this day go to my lawyer and make over to your daughter every stick and stone that I stand possessed of. And I will leave the country, and undertake that she shall neither see me nor hear of me while she lives. I will be as though I were dead to her."

Mr. Nesbit laboured to repress the exultation in his features. He saw himself in imagination virtual master of the greatest estate in the county. Maxwell's property conjoined with Douros would set him on a pinnacle. Here was more than he had ever hoped for. And artfully he employed the stimulus of opposition.

"This is sheer quixotism," he said. "I cannot accept such a sacrifice. It will discredit me with the county."

"And I say, sir," flamed the young man, "that it does not lie with you to accept or reject. Your utmost right in the matter is to see that proper provision is made for your daughter; and I demand that you shall ride with me at once."

Mr. Nesbit laughed with an assumption of contempt. "Nonsense," he said. "I cannot hear of this. Sleep on it for a week—and I doubt not that your bed will bring you more reasonable sentiments. See Isabella and apologise to her, if you will, for any roughness there may have been in your dealings with her."

Deliberately, he drove his goad into the galled spot as he saw the young man's face grow pale with

shame. He saw the look of fierce contempt gather, and he welcomed it now for an ally.

"I repeat to you, sir," was the reply, "that my mind is made up. Every moment that I delay in this house is an added insult to the woman whose life I have wrecked at its first blossoming. I demand as a right that you shall accompany me. And further, that Dean Vigors shall come with you as a witness."

Mr. Nesbit turned and rang the bell. "Enough of this," he said with well simulated anger, "you have very sufficiently expressed your contempt for my judgement. The fit person to reason with you is your attorney, Martin, who I make no doubt will put an end to all these heroics. But since you demand it as a right, Vigors and I will follow you to Letterward this afternoon. It needs some time, as I am sure a man of your experience will remember, to prepare the papers necessary to consummate such an exploit as you propose." Then to the servant who answered his summons, he said: "Mr. Maxwell wishes to ride at once. Bring his horse. And now, sir," he turned to Jack, "I will leave you, and terminate this painful conversation. If you do not think better of this folly before your horse is round, we shall set out at noon for Martin's office, and there, I doubt not, shall find you converted."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE horse was at the door and Jack mounted, leaving with the stable lad a gratuity that astonished him. Jack remembered grimly how he had filled his pockets with coin for the wedding.

He passed up at an easy trot between the banks of laurel and rhododendron, and then along under the trees; but when he reached the

first of the great sloping pastures through which the avenue cut athwart, he turned the young mare on to the turf, and felt her break joyfully into the gallop. Rain had fallen in the night, the turf was cool, soft and delicious under her clean small hoofs. Drove of rabbits scampered and scuttled in from their feeding to their burrows in the edge of the long plantation that fringed the lough. The sun was breaking out through the clouds, and Jack sat close, his hand light on the rein, while the passion of the gallop passed into his blood, as the strong slender creature under him gathered herself in, stretched herself out, in the swift flowing stride.

As the freshness of the beast spent itself, and he drew in, reflection stirred in him painfully. He and the brown mare must part, and of all the luxuries that had come to him with his fortune none had been so wholly enjoyable as a good stable. Still, the world was wide, and in the new world, towards which he had set his face, there was room and to spare for a gallop.

But it seemed this morning as if the corner of the old world, from which especially he exiled himself, desired to be regretted. He trotted out of the gate, flinging coins in profusion to the people of the lodge; and, as he pushed on along the road by the base of Slievemor, and then, turning to the left, took the bend towards Carrig and Lanan bridge, the eyes of all dumb things were bright to woo him. Bell heather stood up in clumps, the smaller, prouder, stronger kind glowing purple, the larger and less rigid blooming pink. They sprang in bright patches among straying bramble blossom, or through trails of honeysuckle; they contrasted with the soft gold of furze, with the clearer, more golden

glory of broom ; they set off, and were set off by, the young olive-green of bog myrtle. And, where there were hedgerows, there were roses ; some white and small-flowered, some the faint, pale, delicate, trailing stems that all Britain knows ; but many, too, were of a kind peculiar to northern Ireland, strong and vivid pink, vivid as the purple heather, lovely at the full spread of their petals, exquisite in the bud that reddened deeper and darker to the tip. Fairer still, sweeter, more intimate and characteristic, were the little sand-roses, that, wandering upward here from their native sandhills, spread free and bushy, their close-set thorns and dainty intricate leafage starred all over with creamy moons of flower, honey-scented.

And in the freshness of sun after rain, all the odours—faint fragrance of the roses, clinging breath of honey-suckle, pungency of heather and myrtle, blended with that indefinable scent of green things growing and the warm soft exhalations of moist peat—all the odours caressed and courted him, as he rode slowly on the familiar way.

Over the bridge now, and up the steep rise on to bare moor beyond ; and here was the point where he was used to look back across the lough, and past Carrig, to the home where he had left Mary. Jealousy, yet not jealousy, only a pang of regret for all that he had lost, moved him now to quicken ; and he clattered over the rough peaty road with its deep brown ruts, to the bend round the lower lake, through Glen, the little village of mountain folk which nestled at the end of the reed-fringed water.

Up then, up the rise of Slieve Alt, slanting up and up on a slope so steep that he dismounted, walking beside the mare ; and always behind him across the bay showed the broad white front of James Nesbit's mansion.

Now he had left the high mountain tarn below him ; he was nearly at the end of the long climb : he had only to mount, and two minutes would carry him through the gap in the mountain range, and Douros would be out of sight for ever. But he stopped, and he stood with his hand on the mare's neck, looking long across the beautiful blue water, to the clustering green woods, and the purple-brown of the hill behind them, and thinking long thoughts, half mocking, half tender, of those six months that had been a holiday time, when all the world smiled on his youth.

Now the two figures, who had been to his mind the centre of that lovely prospect whenever he looked on it (as he had looked so often from this point of vantage) were strangely displaced—Mary in flight from Douros, vanished with her lover ; himself here on the hilltop, an exile looking back before he fled, a criminal self-condemned. And there in Douros was this new figure, so beautiful, so tragic, by him alone to be looked upon with horror. What would she do with her life, he wondered vaguely. Only this he knew ; that he would give her all the freedom that he could. She would not thank him for it—so much he knew by instinct—but at least, and he hugged himself upon the thought, he would be free of her contempt. And Mary, when she heard, would recognise that what he had done yesterday was done in madness ; that he was rightly to be judged only by what he did to-day.

With a brusque movement he turned and mounted. The mare took him swiftly through the gap, picked her way down the stony road, ploughed with many water-courses, and in a little while they were on the level again and clattering sharply towards Kilcolumb. Almost for the first time Jack passed the hospitable gate of old

Mr. Morrison, not without desire to confide his troubles to the kind genial scholar; but he knew well that from such a quarter all advice would be to make the best of things as they were. And so, crossing the Owenbeg, he trotted on through the little village. The tale had spread already, and folk stared at him doubtfully as he passed through. Along the hilly road, past the old Franciscan abbey, across another bridge, with Drummond lough on the left, the mare went with her head for home. And now he was at the gate of his own house, where the gateposts no longer stood awry as they had stood in the old man's time; and he trotted up the short drive, clean now and well kept, to the high narrow whitewashed front of the slate-roofed dwelling.

The servants were shy of him; they too had wind of the story; and they saw trouble in his face. Jack forestalled enquiries with swift and peremptory orders. Sending the mare to the stable, he ordered Rory to be brought round in half an hour, and demanded food at once.

But the dogs were not shy. The brown water spaniel with her long ears and her rat-tail; the red setter, over whom he had shot snipe late in the last season, over whom he had meant to shoot so much more this coming winter; the little nondescript terrier, his college companion—all these rushed upon him demonstratively and refused to be put away. It was all very well: he might want to sort a few papers, burn a few letters and sentimental notes, but that was no reason why their noses should not be shoved into his hand, their heads rest on his knee. All the more reason why they should be demonstrative, because things seemed uneasy and curious in the house that day. Among them they brought the young man very near to tears.

His guns, his rods, these too gave a sting to banishment, and brought the sacrifice into a realised shape. His books, newly installed round his sanctum, were yet other friends to be parted from. And if his study was full of lamentable farewells, the rest of the house was more painful. In a luxury of self-torment he went out, the dogs at his heels and fawning round him, to look at the rooms he had made ready for Mary.

"Yes, lad," he said to the red setter, whose nose was thrust up against his hand, as he stood surveying the bedroom with a twisted smile, "I wonder who'll sleep here now."

He went down and ate hastily, perfunctorily, but with appetite. His ride had chased off the effects of the wine; he was young and strong. Before he was fairly finished he heard Rory's feet on the gravel.

Then he summoned the domestics: they came in confusedly, the girls inclined to titter. "I see you know what has happened," he said. Then he told them in the fewest words possible that he was going away for a while; that they were to remain till further orders, but that he could not promise more. Then with a gift that would compensate them in any case, he shook hands all round; and they after the Irish fashion wept on him, blessed him, and encouraged him, till he was embarrassed and went to his horse as a means of escape. But the dogs resented being left behind; and he, to speak the truth, had a sore heart at leaving them. The tears were still thick in his eyes when he reached the high road, and turned Rory's head towards Letterward.

#### CHAPTER XV.

OLD Martin was in his office when Jack Maxwell was shown in to him,



with the promptitude due to a chief among clients. The lean brown snuff-scented little man was no more a stranger to the story than any one else within twenty miles, and it had perturbed him mightily. He had spent hours since the news reached him in blaming himself for want of foresight in refusing to stay at Douros. This marriage made under these conditions would be apt to give Mr. Nesbit a strong hold, and he remembered with fear that he had declared something not unlike enmity to James Nesbit in James Nesbit's own house. It might cost him the Maxwell agency, and Mr. Martin ruefully considered the effect of this upon the provision for the eight young Martins.

But, to do the lawyer justice, when he saw Jack Maxwell's drawn white face, his own woes were forgotten. He had a genuine liking for this new employer who had dealt generously and courteously with him—with whom there was no fault to find except an excess of generosity in his dealings with others.

"Why Mr. Maxwell," he said, rising with fussy welcome, "you look poorly. You have fatigued yourself too much. A glass of wine, now, before we come to business. Oh, but I insist; you need it, sir, by your colour."

He fetched his own peculiar bottle of sherry from a cupboard as he spoke, and forced Jack to swallow a glass. Then sitting down opposite the young man, and watching him keenly, he began. "Now, Mr. Maxwell, I see well enough there is more truth in the story I hear than I could have wished. It was a foolish thing of me to leave you in the lurch. But let me hear your own version of it before we say more."

Jack winced. As he had drawn nearer, he had liked less and less the prospect of this recital, which he foresaw. With a hard strained voice

he told the lawyer in outline what had happened. Martin heard him to the end, listening with the air of a man who is still baulked of the essential fact, and continually expecting it. Then with an anxiety that was almost passionate, he asked, "Did you sign anything?"

"No," said Jack. "But that makes no matter—" The lawyer interrupted him with an exclamation.

"Thank God," he said, smiting his hand on his lean thigh. "We're all right then. James Nesbit has overreached himself this time." And he walked up and down the room, rubbing his hands.

A grim sense of humour for the first time overspread Jack's view of the situation, mingled with an angry disgust. This then was the cardinal point in the affair—that the money was all right. "Poor Martin," he thought to himself.

"Perhaps it is as well," he said quietly. "It leaves me free to make arrangements."

"Entirely free, Mr. Maxwell," assented the lawyer with a positive chuckle. And again he rubbed his hands in renewed glee.

"And I have come here to make them," Jack continued.

"Very wise indeed, Mr. Maxwell. The sooner we have a proper understanding the better. Take another glass of wine."

A smile came over Jack's face as he accepted the wine. "I am afraid, Mr. Martin," he said, "that you may not wholly approve what I propose."

The little man sat down and looked sharply at his client, his instincts all alert to resist an assault upon that sanctity of property which might again be menaced. With an air of benevolent neutrality he requested Mr. Maxwell to explain his intentions.

"You see, Mr. Martin," Jack said, "there is simply one thing we have

to look at in this business. A lady has been outraged,"—his lips flinched as he forced them to the word—"and by me."

"I demur entirely to that, sir," answered the lawyer, sharp as a shot. "The ceremony was thoroughly legal, and performed with consent of all responsible parties."

"Mr. Martin," retorted Jack, "she gave no consent, and I was mad drunk; that is the best that can be said. The word I have used is the only one that expresses my meaning. She is—my wife"—and again his lips flinched and hesitated—"only by brute force. And I will force no woman to live with me."

The lawyer was in a measure abashed by the passion of self-reproach in the young man's voice, and he shifted his standpoint. "Well, Mr. Maxwell, we will say no more of that. But I am against separations on principle. If you live apart from your wife, you must maintain her, sir; and I can tell you that Mr. Nesbit's expectations in the way of maintenance will not be trifling."

Again the radical incongruity of their views touched Jack's sense of humour, and he laughed out, bitterly enough. "On that matter I think I can satisfy Mr. Nesbit. I propose to assign to her the whole of my late uncle's property."

The lawyer sprang up to his feet as if shot from his chair. "This is simple madness, Mr. Maxwell. I refuse to have any hand in any such proceeding."

Jack's face grew dogged and impassive. "I knew you would say that. I suppose it is your duty to say it."

"I would as soon give you a knife to cut your throat with," Martin retorted hotly.

Again Jack's face twisted itself into a smile. "Providence is very

good, Mr. Martin," he said. "It gives no man a monopoly of knives." Then altering his tone he turned to persuasion. "Of course, Mr. Martin, I cannot expect you to understand how I feel. But I feel it as something unbearable—a disgrace so deep that I cannot sit down under it. I cannot stay in this country, in the first place because I cannot face people who know this story."

Martin raised his hands in a gesture of deprecation. "You are too sensitive, Mr. Maxwell. It will be a nine day's wonder. And the whole country will know well enough that the entire blame of the business rests with James Nesbit. Was it he, may I ask, who put this notion in your head?"

Jack flushed with a touch of mortified vanity. "I am not so completely a puppet," he answered. "Mr. Nesbit opposed the project when I laid it before him. And, as to the blame, if I set up a claim to be considered as a mere catspaw or instrument in the outrage, a pretty part I should play. I shirk no responsibility. But this is all beside the mark, Mr. Martin. My duty is to make reparation, and there is only one way to do it. I cannot give this lady her freedom; she and I are married. But what I can do, I will, and that is to go clean out of her knowledge, and if desertion gives her the right to marry again after a term of years, she shall have the right. And the compensation that I will make shall be to the last penny of my ability."

Mr. Martin looked at him with bewilderment. "Well now, Mr. Maxwell, this passes all. Surely to God the best way for you both—two fine handsome young people—is to make friends and live happily together on your good estate."

Jack leaped up from his chair. "I

tell you, Mr. Martin," he cried, "that all the estates in Ireland would not tempt me to live a week with a woman who tells me that she loathes and hates me, and must make me loathe and hate myself. Give me a pen and paper and I will write down my instructions. If you choose to carry them out, well; if not, I must go elsewhere. Mr. Nesbit and Dean Vigors will be here within the afternoon, and things must be in readiness."

Very much as he might have humoured a madman, Martin ushered Jack into another room and provided him with writing materials. The young man dashed at the pen, wrote, erased, tore, wrote again, rewrote. Finally his words took shape to his liking—

I, John Maxwell, of Castle Hayes, having no kinsfolk with claims upon me or in need of assistance, desire now to make what atonement is possible for the wrong done to Isabella, daughter of James Nesbit, of Douros House, in her enforced marriage to me. I therefore assign to her, for her sole use and benefit, the entire property, real and personal, which came into my possession by inheritance from the late John Hayes, reserving only for myself the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, the balance of my patrimony possessed by me at the death of John Hayes. And I further undertake to depart from Great Britain and Ireland, and to hold no communication with my wife Isabella, nor in any way to molest her. I desire that all this property shall be in her absolute disposal; but I commend to her sisterly kindness the interests of her sister Mary, and entreat that she will forgive whatever part her sister's actions may have contributed to this unfortunate marriage. And I make this disposition of my free will, and without the suggestion of any person whatsoever.

He was signing his name when the sound of voices caught his ear. Mr. Nesbit had arrived, and Martin was already high in words with him. "There is no use in talking to me, Mr. Nesbit. I say the whole thing was a plot and a most discreditable

plot. Fortunately it miscarried in a main particular, and Mr. Maxwell will now be advised by me in his dealing with the situation."

Mr. Nesbit retorted calmly. "Mr. Maxwell is aware that I myself insisted that he should come to you for advice."

"That is true, Mr. Martin," said Jack, coming forward, "and I will add that Mr. Nesbit himself advised me as you have done."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Nesbit with his ironical smile. "And since it appears that my advice is looked upon with some suspicion, I have asked Dean Vigors, whose position gives him a claim on every man's respect, to give his counsel in this matter."

Jack looked angrily at the Dean, who came forward with his bland gesture. "My dear Mr. Maxwell," he said, "we are fated to meet in awkward situations. But it appears to me that in regard to this business of yesterday—which was unfortunate only in the manner—scandal should be avoided."

"I can understand that you should be of that opinion, sir," Jack retorted fiercely. "Your part in it will scarcely redound to your credit."

The Dean waved aside the taunt. "Believe me, Mr. Maxwell, I do not think of myself at all. The society in which I move will hardly blame me for conforming to the custom of a convivial and somewhat eccentric country. Rather, they will think it fortunate that my presence as officiating clergyman lent an air of respectability to what might otherwise have been a somewhat irregular ceremony. Our friend Mr. Mahony was scarce capable I think. Whereas I myself, like your excellent father-in-law and yourself, had indeed, I confess it, drowned my sense of caution, but was no more affected by my liquor than a gentleman should be."

"Sir," Jack broke in impatiently, "I did not ask your presence to discuss the degrees of drunkenness. I demanded that you should assist as a witness at the steps which I propose to take in remedy of the great wrong which you abetted."

The Dean passed his hand across his lips with an urbane smile. "Ah, Mr. Maxwell, young blood is impatient and generous. As you say, let us not discuss the degrees in which we were all last night more or less irresponsible. To-day concerns us—and the future. Do not lose sight of the future. To-day—you who are young, charming, witty, and prosperous, have a beautiful wife who is incensed with you—let us say, justifiably incensed. To-day therefore you propose, as an atonement, to fling all your worldly goods into the lap of the beautiful wife, stripping yourself of your prosperity. But, Mr. Maxwell, think of the future. You leave your beautiful wife in the most embarrassing position conceivable; neither maid, wife, nor widow. You give her riches which she can hardly in her position profit by; you deprive her of her natural protector."

"She has her father," answered Jack sullenly. The aspect of the case now presented was one that he had not contemplated. He felt toils woven round his will—the struggle grew difficult against this silken demeanour.

"Her father, Mr. Maxwell," the Dean replied, waving aside the objection, "is not the natural protector of a beautiful young married woman. And moreover, living as he does in seclusion, his protection must withdraw her from a world which she was framed to adorn, and which—"

"Sir," said Jack, breaking in desperately, "I cannot argue with you. You torture me. All that you say merely increases my perception of the

wrong that I have done. But I cannot and will not consent to consider myself in any real sense this lady's husband. I refuse either to bind her or to be bound by the infamous chain which you were the agent to lay upon us. I will take no man's counsel in this matter, and least of all yours."

"I ask your pardon, Mr. Maxwell," put in the lawyer, "but Dean Vigors should be heard. As your legal adviser, I am bound by my professional honour to see that you consider all sides of such a course as you propose. Pray go on, Mr. Dean."

"Well then," said Jack sullenly, "what do you propose? That I should return to Douros, see this lady, and say, 'Madam, here I am, you will remember the agreeable circumstances of our meeting. I have to remind you that you are my wife. Pray accompany me.'"

Again Dean Vigors made his gesture of bland deprecation. "Not at all, my dear Mr. Maxwell. I fully agree with your first instinct. Raw wounds should be given time to heal. Absent yourself for a month, two months, six months—a year if you will; return at the end of it, and I make no doubt you will find your wife eager to see you."

"If at the same time you assign for that period your revenues to Isabella, to Mr. Martin here, to anyone you please," added Mr. Nesbit, "I do not care to whom, so long as you leave yourself without the command of money—why then you will be in a position to realise the effect of this vagary, and I make no doubt but you will come to reason."

The ring of mockery in his voice raised Jack's spirit finally. "Let us cut this short," he said. "Mr. Dean, I recognise the force of what you say, and of Mr. Nesbit's taunt as well. I have not been so strong in the past that I care to give myself a new occa-

sion of failing. I refuse to allow myself the opportunity of changing my mind; God knows to what baseness I might be tempted. To-day I see my course clear, and it is expressed in this paper." Then with quick utterance, he read over the document.

"Did you ever hear such a proposal?" screamed the little lawyer. "Why, sir, the thing is materially impossible."

"I do not agree with you, Mr. Martin," said Mr. Nesbit. "The thing is absurd, but it is possible enough."

"Let it be possible or impossible, I refuse to do it," retorted Martin fiercely.

Mr. Nesbit smiled again his hard smile. "I think, Mr. Martin, that if Mr. Maxwell put before you the alternative of handing over the job to Thorpe and the agency with it, that means could be found. You have no right, sir, to dictate to gentlemen in this fashion."

"Mr. Nesbit," put in Jack sharply, "I cannot allow Mr. Martin to be bullied. Mr. Martin, I will add a clause to that paper advising and requesting that no change should be made in the management of the property unless it is imperative. But the deed must be drawn, and you will see that it is infinitely better that you should draw it."

"I see," said Martin sullenly, "that Mr. Nesbit's show of opposition is only a pretext. He is driving you, Mr. Maxwell, under colour of holding you back."

"Sir," flashed Nesbit at him, "you are insolent."

In Jack's heart at last there gleamed a ray of triumph. Here at last was a thrust that had gone home. Masks were off now. "Mr. Nesbit, I repeat that Mr. Martin shall not be bullied. His observation concurs with mine. I begin to understand your methods."

Mr. Nesbit's wrath blazed. "Do you presume on your youth, or on my age, my good lad?" he said savagely. "You shall answer for those words."

Jack's coolness grew as the older man's fury waxed. Now at last he was in the place to strike. "Sir," he replied slowly, "there are limits even to indecency. It is impossible that I should meet you. I will gladly meet anyone whom you may indicate to replace you. But frankly I expect no such challenge. An accident might send the Douros mortgage into less lenient hands—Oh sir, control yourself. We cannot come to fisticuffs before this distinguished clergyman."

When Mr. Martin recounted this scene afterwards, as he did a hundred times, he always said that at this point, if Nesbit had possessed a weapon, Jack was a dead man. But he was unarmed; and after an instant of tense and thrilling pause, while the two men's eyes met and crossed like swords, the Dean and Martin looking on saw a heave of Nesbit's whole body as he checked the impulse to spring; and then gradually his muscles unbent, his hands opened out, as his brain and his will got the mastery of them. "Then," Martin would go on, "as if nothing in the world had been happening, he just turned to me and said, 'Well, do we go to Thorpe?'"

"You may go where you choose," said I, but the plain truth was I did not want them to go. If that fellow had got a finger in, out I would have gone. And as for young Maxwell, there was no gainsaying him. His face was shining now, as if he had won a race, and he says to me, 'You understand, Martin, you have a new owner to deal with. You



may make up your mind to that. But the new owner is not Mr. Nesbit; not by any means. Mr. Nesbit's daughter will be the owner of Castle Hayes and the Maxwell estate, and,' says he, leaning heavy on the words, 'of the mortgage on her father's property. And if she takes after her father, Mr. Nesbit may have a harder hand to deal with than ever yours or mine was.' And at that Nesbit laughed to himself, like the savage that he was; but young Maxwell looked at him and said something in French—I believe it meant that Nesbit might laugh on the other side of his mouth yet. And anyhow I consented, and we had the deed engrossed there and then in the office by a smart clerk I had at that time—Patrick Malone was his name—while the four of us sat in the room there, as unpleasant a company as ever I was in: Only by the Lord you would have thought by the look of him it was going to get a fortune young Maxwell was, and not throw one away. And when the deed came, he insisted that Dean Vigors should witness it, and the Dean was not willing, but 'By heavens!' says the young chap, 'if you cross me in this, I will make your name stink through all England for this business. I will write to your Archbishop and your Bishop and the King himself to lay information against you for a drunken licentious disgrace to your cloth.' And the Dean made another of his fine speeches, but he signed as meek as milk, and Patrick Malone witnessed it after him, and the thing was done. And then young Maxwell ordered his horse, and he took the hundred and fifty pound in his pocket, and he shook hands with me; it was black night but I couldn't stop him; he mounted and away with him, and from that day to this neither I nor

any in this country have heard a word from him. But I tell you this: when he left, he left with his head high, and James Nesbit and his Dean went out of my office with their tails between their legs; and I never saw Nesbit look the same man after."

## CHAPTER XVI.

TREES were bare at Douros, but on the lawn daffodils held up their heads bravely under the soft rain. Isabella looked out of the drawing-room window at the grey lough and at the white drift of cloud wreaths on the slope of Slieve Alt. The bloom of her cheek was richer and fresher than ever, the curves of her figure softer and a thought fuller; she had ripened in beauty. But at the corners of her full mouth the sullen downward curves were a little accentuated, the look of obduracy confirmed.

She did not turn her head when the door of the drawing-room opened and her mother's slow trailing step crossed the room, although to-day it was laboured and heavy. The step came on towards her, hesitated, advanced again. Then she heard her mother's voice, coaxing, tremulous, apologetic:

"Isabel, dear, I have brought somebody to see you."

Suddenly, with her face aflame, Isabella turned round. Mrs. Nesbit stood before her, frail, deprecating, with hope and pleading in her eyes: and in her arms was a long white bundle tenderly held. She stretched it out towards her daughter. "Take her yourself, Isabel. She's just awake and so good."

Mrs. Nesbit's face, faded now and deep-lined, flushed again into beauty, pink as a delicate shell: but a gust of hate, violent in physical aversion, deformed the younger woman's

features. Fierce sullen anger altered her countenance. "How dare you, mother!" she said. "I told you I was not to be annoyed with it. Take the creature away."

Mrs. Nesbit's shining eyes filled with big tears, but the instinct lacking in her daughter was strong in her—so strong, that for once she resisted. "It's very wrong of you to speak like that, Isabel," she protested. "The poor child has done you no harm—There, darling," for the baby moved and raised a faint cry, "hush, now, your mother shall look at you." And coming close to Isabella, she turned so as to show the little pink puckered features and half-closed eyes—"There now; did you ever see anything so perfect?"

But the girl angrily and sullenly turned away her head. "I tell you once for all, I won't be bothered with it. I won't see it. If it is brought in here, I shall stay in my own room."

And she walked towards the door. But her mother with the ruse of a weak creature called to her. "Stop, Isabel, for a minute. I'm not very strong and your unkindness nearly makes me faint. Take the child from me and give it to Kate Duffy; she's out in the hall."

"Is she?" said Isabella, and disregarding her mother's entreaties, she walked swiftly to the door. "Kate," she cried, "Kate Duffy, come here at once."

The buxom, dark-haired, red-cheeked peasant appeared in a moment. "Take that child from Mrs. Nesbit and stop its screaming," she said—for the baby had begun to cry lustily.

"Surely then, Miss Isabel—Mrs. Maxwell, ma'am, I beg your pardon." And Kate bustled over and caught the baby to her with a shower of endearments, as it nestled into her strong young arms and breast with a little soft ending cry.

But Isabella was untouched. "Listen to me, Kate Duffy," she said. "That child is to be kept out of my sight, or it will be the worse for you. You had orders not to bring it into the house."

"Sure, ma'am," said Kate defiantly, "it was the mistress bid me bring it, for the master was away to Lifford. And sure I wanted you to see for yourself how the darling was thriving. Look at that arm, if you please now, Miss Isabel."

"Be off with you out of this," said Isabella sharply, and Kate retreated hastily with her charge. Isabella watched till the door was closed after her. A new pre-occupation was dawning in her eyes. She sat down, picking up a book, and began to turn the pages bitterly. After a while, "Did she say my father was gone to Lifford?" she asked of Mrs. Nesbit who sat furtively drying her eyes.

"Yes, Isabel dear," her mother answered. "And he'll be away to-night. And my dear I can't help being glad. If you knew how dreadful it is to sit at table day after day between two people who will not speak to each other. Not that it is Mr. Nesbit's fault, my dear; you know he is always willing to be as kind to you as ever he was; but you are so headstrong, and you used never to answer when he spoke to you. Won't you try and let bygones be bygones, my dear?"

Isabella threw the book down on the table, rose and walked over to the window. "There's no good in talking. The day is clearing. I think I will go out for a ride."

"Isabel," cried her mother in consternation, "you can't think of such a thing. Come out for a drive with me in the carriage."

"No thank you," her daughter answered. "I am perfectly strong now. The change will do me good."

Mrs. Nesbit's expostulations were useless. In half an hour Isabella was in her riding habit and on the steps. Her horse was round, but old George on a big chestnut was ready to accompany her.

Isabella blazed with rage, and rated the old man for this undesired attendance. But he protested: "Please, ma'am, the mistress gave me orders. And Rover is very fresh to-day."

But neither old George nor any one else in the house could control Isabella; and he retired to the stables, wondering what sudden change had come over the young lady who for these ten months had moved listlessly about the house and grounds, sullen, silent, seeing no one, but never thwarting her father. The household had been much in sympathy with her, till the child was born. Then her refusal to look at it or let it come near her,—many times repeated from the first hour when the nurse brought it to her bedside, and she turned away her head—had alienated the domestics. Only Mr. Nesbit had shown no disapproval of his daughter's conduct, but rather had concurred in her wish to keep out of sight this living reminder of bygone unpleasantness.

Mr. Nesbit also had aged as well as his wife, perhaps by reason of her ageing. The tie between these two was a strangely intimate one, and nothing could hurt one without affecting the other. It was never seen that Mrs. Nesbit permitted herself in any way, not even in the inmost recess of her consciousness, to judge or to blame her master. Only the shadow of a fear that had always lurked in her eyes was now more than a shadow; she started convulsively at any sudden sound of his voice. It was pathetic to see how he redoubled tenderness about her. Yet the shock of that wild night had

evidently struck a cruel blow at the very springs of her vitality; she had never wholly rallied, and the daily life in proximity to the smouldering fire of hatred between her husband and her daughter dragged her steadily toward the grave.

For the first months Mr. Nesbit had watched Isabella as a cat watches a captured bird; he feared an attempt to escape, and what might happen if she got free. But she had offered no resistance when he took into his hands the whole management of her new property; and with his life-long experience of supremacy, he came to think her cowed. Yet even so perhaps he would not have risked absence to-day, but that he had underrated Isabella's physical vigour. Her child was barely three weeks old.

And so he sat on the jury at Lifford endeavouring to force a severe sentence on the Catholic bishop—now at last taken—who had married Mary to her lover. Meanwhile Isabella crossed the hill that lay between Douros and the outer world. Martin, returning late that night from his day's work at Lifford found her awaiting him in his office.

In all his long experience, Martin used to say, nothing so surprised him as the completeness of her forethought. Through all those months, while she bore the physical discomfort of her condition, accentuated hourly by fierce resentment against all that it implied, every detail of her future course had been elaborated. After Maxwell's departure her mother and her friends had urged her at first to go away and seek some relief in a change of scene; but shame and a sullen instinct such as keeps the hurt beast to its lair, had prevented her; and while she still brooded over her wrongs, the presence of their chief author daily adding fuel to her hate, there came upon her the knowledge

of this further consequence. Then, indeed, with hate and humiliation tenfold increased, there increased also her unwillingness to show herself to the world where she was known, to which it was her full intention to return, and where she proposed to profit by the compensation which she received as a bare instalment of justice.

There had been one interview between her and Martin, in which she made herself fully acquainted with the whole extent of her property—and in which she had realised also, though Martin was not aware that she had done so, her hold over her father. Knowing him as she had bitter cause to, she knew he would stick at no measure to obtain his purpose; and she determined to postpone the assertion of her independence and her power, till she should be able to carry out her plans in full. She had in spite of Martin's protestations given her father power of attorney to act for her till she should choose to cancel it. Mr. Nesbit's first act had been to dismiss Martin and transfer the business to Thorpe.

That was the first point which Martin raised. Why had she come to him, since she had suffered him to be dismissed? And her answer was: she had foreseen that he would be the more willing to assist her now, since his interest must lie in doing so.

It was war that she proposed to him. Briefly, she would assume entire control of her property, she

would remove to England; he would act for her, and he would at once press for settlement of the Douros mortgage, and, if possible, foreclose.

Martin, listening midway between fear and exultation, interposed here to expostulate. Such action was ill suited to a daughter: more, he was sure that it was against Mr. Maxwell's wish.

He was told peremptorily that Mr. Maxwell's wishes were of no concern, and that his employer would judge for herself of her own conduct. If he did not choose to undertake the business, she would go elsewhere. If he did, he must in the first place assist her to make good her escape beyond the reach of Mr. Nesbit, who was capable of any violence.

And so it happened that Isabella and her lawyer, driving in a close carriage on the road to Lifford in the dark of that March evening, passed Mr. Nesbit, riding furiously, booted and spurred, on his way from an assize where the jury had refused to convict O'Donnell. Furiously he rode that night, thwarted and baffled; and at every mile he rode, he doubled the start of his recalcitrant daughter, now well on her way to Dublin and the protection of Lady Dungannon, before she should ship on the Holyhead packet, and remove to scenes alien to her home and its detested associations,—leaving behind her nothing but her vengeance and her child.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE COLONIES AND IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

DURING the past few months many articles dealing directly or indirectly with the great question of Imperial Defence have reached me from various quarters, and I have also read a number of others which have been published in civilian periodicals or newspapers. The perusal of these articles has left a general impression upon my mind that a dangerous acerbity characterises most of the arguments employed by the champions of the two parties that this question has created. The ultra-imperial among the British writers scorn everything that falls below their ideals, and ascribe to meanness, narrow-mindedness, "parochialism" and like causes the refusal of our colonies to accept to the full the demands made upon them. Similarly, the colonials are equally bitter in denunciation of the arrogance, greediness and selfish motives of their British opponents.

That such a spirit should be abroad is very regrettable. Co-operation in imperial defence to be of real value must be of the most cordial nature, and any unwilling assistance extorted from the colonies is more likely to end in a severance of the existing ties of sentiment than in furthering the consummation of a Pan-Britannic confederacy established upon a really sound and enduring basis. The problem of imperial defence, merely because of its extreme importance, must necessarily involve a conflict of opinions, and in this respect it resembles every other great question of national policy. Indeed the more weighty the matter in hand the more certain it becomes that the

solution which commends itself to the responsible authorities will encounter strenuous opposition. To frame ideals is comparatively easy, but to obtain general acceptance of them is extremely difficult, and the best that can as a rule be hoped for is the adoption of the most efficient compromise between the ideal and the practicable.

Even systems of government are themselves invariably compromises, falling very far short of the ideal. The autocracy of a perfect autocrat and the democracy of a pure democracy are unlike unattainable, for the simple reason that man being only man is consequently an envious and a selfish being. The very existence of perfection would usually suffice to provoke antagonism. Aristides was banished from Athens for no other reason than that his personal probity and the sagacity of his policy obstructed the less worthy aims of other people. The present government of Great Britain is not perfect even in the eyes of its own supporters; but it is not upon account of its faults that its political opponents would evict it if they could; nor is it owing to a lively sense of possessing a *mens conscia recti* that the Unionists prefer to continue in office, but because they command the necessary majority and intend to continue there so long as they can retain its support. Party government and party opposition represent, as regards the first the desire to retain office, and as regards the second the desire to obtain it. Being in power involves an obligation to conduct the public business and a consequent exposure to criticism.



Being in opposition promotes a desire to change places with the Government of the day, and a consequent habit of denying that the latter has done or means to do anything whatever that is good—unless it be in a matter of some policy alleged to have been impudently stolen from the opposition carpet-bag.

Such are the political customs that the British colonies have inherited from the mother-land, and it is because of this that any co-operative scheme, be it for defence or for any other purpose, is surrounded by so many and so great difficulties. We cannot ourselves agree unanimously upon any definite line of policy, and, even though a programme may be adopted by a good and sufficient majority within the United Kingdom, it has yet to face the uncertainties of all the various colonial parliaments before it can be made to apply as an imperial edict.

There is in every colony, as in Great Britain herself, a party languishing in the cold shade of opposition and anxious to exchange this for the salubrious sunshine of power. What wonder then is it that the merits of every proposition receive less consideration than the chances of making party capital out of exposing its defects? All this is very provoking to those who honestly study the welfare of the Empire, but it is inevitable; and that we should rail at the colonies upon account of it is not only injudicious but ridiculous. Colonial policy lives, so to speak, under a cucumber frame, while we ourselves inhabit a huge conservatory, and necessarily it must be the larger expanse of glass that will suffer the more damage when the stones are flying about.

In the actual conditions, it is idle to expect the unanimous acceptance by the colonies of any proposals

suggested to them, no matter how excellent they may be in themselves. What the British Government would like to do would of course be to secure the acceptance of the system of imperial defence recommended to it by the experts in whom it has complete confidence; but all that it actually has power to do is merely to receive or to reject whatever the colonies may individually be willing to offer. The ideal is the "one navy on one sea," and there is no reason whatever why this ideal should not be kept steadily before our eyes and with a fervent hope that it may some day be realised. But at present the ideal and the practicable are somewhat sharply divided and we have no option but to content ourselves, as best we can, with whatever may actually be within our reach. The less we press the ideal the more likely we are to obtain immediately or eventually something reasonably approaching to it. In grasping too greedily at the shadow, we are extremely unlikely to fare better than did the dog in the fable.

The great self-governing colonies are no longer in their childhood, and their opinions upon every imperial subject are entitled to respect, even when they are not such as commend themselves to our entire approval. A willingness to be led but not to be driven is a common characteristic of Anglo-Saxon communities, and every effort made to force particular views of practical imperialism down unwilling throats can only result in exciting a stronger determination to resist any dictation whatever. With the history of the fiasco which cost us the loss of a wholly British North America before our eyes, it seems highly impolitic, to say the least of it, that what amounts to an ultimatum should have been seriously suggested in a letter written

by Mr. A. H. Loring, not in his private capacity but as Secretary of the "Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee," to the TIMES of January 9th, 1903, in which he says: "So long as the United Kingdom allows her exclusive responsibility for these colonies to remain, so long will there be no serious consideration by them of the requirements of Imperial Defence. Put a term to those responsibilities and the question at once becomes a real one, with infinite possibilities for the future of the Empire." Exactly so. If we, indeed, were to inform the colonies that we should decline undertaking their defence after the expiration of, let us say, five years, unless they had meanwhile assumed their proper share of the imperial burden, the "possibilities for the future of the Empire" would at once become not "infinite" but *finite*—for there would soon cease to be an empire. I am aware that Mr. Loring endeavoured to correct the impression conveyed by his first letter, in a second which followed on the 19th of the same month. He was not, in my opinion, successful, but even granting that he was it would still have been better had the original letter found its way into the wastepaper basket instead of into the columns of the TIMES.

Let us by all means have all the arguments, from both sides of the question, so far as regards the best means of arriving at an efficient system of imperial defence, but let there be no hectoring and no impugning of the motives or intelligence of those who, for reasons which they themselves believe to be good and sufficient, support views in opposition to our own.

It is one thing to admire an ideal, but quite another to admit the practicability of its application under all conditions. No one is so foolish as

to pretend that the naval or military forces of an empire can have their entire value without complete unison under a single head. To extol the importance of such unison is merely to labour a truism; and consequently it is easy to understand the impatience of naval strategists when they find the application of an obviously sound theory obstructed by people who urge the delusive claims of "local defence." Clearly, the measures that ensure the strongest defence of an empire as a whole must furnish also the most effectual (because the most permanent) safeguard of all its component parts. But, granting all this, allowance must yet be made for the just pride which our colonies very naturally feel in the sense of proprietorship over their own forces, a feeling which cannot find its full vent unless the forces supplied at colonial expense are maintained, primarily at all events, as strictly local organisations. The taxpayer of every country likes to see under his own eyes the forces for which he pays, and to feel that they are his very property. Selfishness is part of man's nature, and the Londoner would be as strongly disinclined to incur what he believed to be avoidable risks of war, in order that Sydney or Brisbane should be rendered absolutely secure, as the Australian actually is to forget what he believes to be the interests of Australia for the sake of safeguarding London and the Empire. Really broad-minded men are the exception rather than the rule; we have many politicians, but very few statesmen, and it is a common complaint that the average member of Parliament is no better than a mere vestryman. All questions depend for their settlement upon popular opinion, and it is not always possible for those who really comprehend the full import of

questions at issue to guide the "man in the street" in the right direction. And, besides, there are always men of influence whose chief aim is to mislead rather than to direct, if only they can thereby win votes for their party—and office for themselves. If we cannot obtain a purely unselfish loyalty to imperial interests from all classes at home, how can we justly upbraid colonials upon account of their only similar failings?

It is true enough, and the colonies know it as well as we do, that the fate of the British Empire does not hang upon the inviolate security of colonial or even of British coasts, but upon fleet-power at sea. Yet, if the British Empire were to fall to-morrow, the subjugation of, for example, Australia would not necessarily follow. That Great Britain, shorn of her colonies, would sink to the level of Holland is clear, but that her colonies in general would become the spoil of the victor is by no means a foregone conclusion. The conquest of Australia would be a colossal enterprise beside which our recent expedition to South Africa would sink into insignificance. Thus—even if we were justified in adopting such a tone—threats to cast off Australia as the penalty of failing to embrace the entire doctrine of "one navy on one sea," would, if carried out or anticipated, result in certain mischief to the mother-country, but in only moderate risks to her discarded daughter. In such circumstances, quite apart from all considerations of good taste and brotherhood, it seems better for us to accept any available compromise than to insist vainly upon the full pound of flesh.

The question of Australia and imperial naval defence is a typical one that will serve to illustrate the whole matter. Australia has for a considerable number of years paid an annual contribution to the Im-

perial Navy; but the amount (only £106,000) is obviously disproportionate to the proper responsibility of the Australian colonies. That the contribution hitherto paid is insufficient the Australians freely admit, but they resist the idea of making a larger grant to the British exchequer upon the grounds that the money expended by Australia for naval purposes should be devoted to providing an Australian contingent of ships and manning them with Australians. In short, Australia desires an Australian navy, the money spent upon which would circulate chiefly in Australia, whilst the proceeds of that expenditure would be visible to the eyes of the Australian tax-payer—a navy all his own and for that reason appealing to him more directly than British ships in which he had only a fractional proprietorship. In the Victorian navy Australia already possesses a germ, so to speak, and from this small beginning an Australian squadron of some importance might not improbably take shape within the course of a few years.

Let us suppose that Australia, Canada and South Africa each create navies of their own, severally amounting to, let us say, one battleship, four second-class cruisers, and sundry smaller vessels; and that these colonial squadrons are primarily intended by their owners for local defence. Might not Great Britain yet feel entire confidence that the colony which was not itself in imminent peril would eagerly despatch its ships to the imperial point of danger? If we grant this much, and past experiences would seem to justify the assumption, it would appear as if the situation arrived at would, practically speaking, be much the same as if we actually had "one navy on one sea." A fundamental principle of the imperial navy thesis is that the threatened

point will be defended with the whole strength of the Empire ; in other words, that forces will be withdrawn from unassailed areas in order to deal with the enemy wherever he may be formidable. The only difference then between "one navy" directly under the orders of the authorities at Whitehall, and the closely allied navies of Great and Greater Britain, is that in the latter case the colonies would themselves send their ships to the place where their services might be required, while in the former they would be summarily deprived of the imperial squadron hitherto on the station. It needs scarcely to be pointed out that if mischief befell during the absence of the squadron, a willing sacrifice would be borne with some cheerfulness, whereas an obligatory one would provoke resentment. Just as in England there used to be persons not otherwise wholly insane, who gaily cried, "Perish India! Perish the Colonies!" so also there are even now in the colonies some who question whether the advantages of their connection with the mother-country, in reference to protection from possible enemies, sufficiently compensate for the liability to being involved in wars with which they might have no direct concern. To furnish such persons with any facts, however specious, that might serve to fortify their argument can scarcely be wise.

Whatever the colonies are to do in aid of imperial defence must, in order to ensure the best results, be absolutely spontaneous. Any point that we may gain by reason of insistent importunity will rather be a step towards the eventual dismemberment of the Empire than towards the permanent consolidation of its strength. What we want at present is to increase our naval power, and we quite reasonably ask the

colonies to bear a more proportionate share in the burden of common defence. To this the colonies reply that they are ready and willing to assist in kind, but not in money paid over to ourselves. They point out that they are self-governing communities and entitled to be guided by their own opinions as to what arrangement will suit them best. They do not care to be protected by contract, as it were, and instead of subsidising the British navy they desire to have their own. Let us take them at their word and give them all possible assistance in the effort which they propose to make—for example by giving our guarantee to any loans which they might wish to raise for the purpose of building ships, dockyards and arsenals. Our ultra-imperialists have been greedily demanding "Clear Turtle," but they must be content with "Hotch-Potch," and in the end it is not improbable that the latter will actually prove the more nutritious delicacy.

We all know that allied armies or navies are not generally so reliable as the homogeneous forces of a single state, but it can seldom happen that a state in alliance with one or more others is not stronger than if it stood alone. Consequently, if the British colonies raise forces of their own, and the mother-country does not relax her own efforts to maintain her offensive and defensive power, the total fighting strength of the British brotherhood must be increased by the amount of the colonial contingents. This is what we chiefly need, and although complete unison in the employment of the combined strength may be theoretically unattainable, there is every reason to believe that in actual war the whole would work together heart and soul for the common cause. We may safely depend upon it that the colonial

determination to place local defence first means no more than the assertion of a principle, enunciated solely in deference to the prejudices of the colonial tax-payer upon the subject of freedom from outside dictation; and that, wherever the enemies of the empire are in arms against it, *there* will be found the colonial contingents side by side with their home-born brethren and contending with them for the post of danger.

Dictation upon the part of the home authorities and experts must be abandoned, and we must confine ourselves to inviting the colonies to say what they are prepared to do in the interests of imperial defence.

If we act thus, we may rely upon obtaining free-will contributions which will gradually increase to formidable proportions; but, if we insist upon the irreducible minimum, we shall in the end get nothing at all. Colonial loyalty needs to be fostered, not sponged upon or coerced. An appeal to the colonies addressed to them by the King himself would have greater weight than any invitation from the Government. Colonial loyalty is centred upon the throne to an extent that is not fully realised in Great Britain.

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## A FLEDGELING REPUBLIC.

A SOUTH AMERICAN revolution is no new thing. It is bound up in our vague notions of that distressful continent with palm-trees and Indians, old-time buccaneers and quick-change modern presidents. When eminent financiers and statesmen tell us from their long experience that the only sure thing in these sunny climes is the unexpected, we are not shocked. On the contrary we feel that, in the words of the immortal Dr. Watts, "it is their nature to," and it is perhaps on this account that our interest in such happenings is but faint. Civil war raged fitfully in Venezuela for over two years before Europe was aware that there was a "crisis." It is not surprising then that no notice has been taken of the struggle which is going on between Bolivia and Brazil for the proprietorship of the rubber-bearing lands of the Upper Amazon. Yet the story of Acre deserves more than a passing attention.

The portion of Bolivia which under the old Spanish Viceroyalty was known as lower Peru is hemmed in in the north to a long, narrow point between Peru and Brazil. Its boundaries have never been clearly marked down. When they attempted to do so, geographers were confronted on the west by a confused jumble of great bare hills, the refuse heap of all nature's crockery. Nor was the task easier on the east. Tropic rains have scored the giant slopes in a thousand water-courses and they have piled their débris below in deposits which are hundreds, and in some cases thousands of feet thick. Then the forest has come, covering hill,

swamp and ravine as with a garment, until they are blent in a deceitful sameness which is the despair of the explorer. Brought thus to halt, the boundary commissioners projected on either hand an imaginary line, which lines, passing more easily than the commissioners over these material obstacles, were to meet in latitude 8° 22' south, at or about the source of the river Javary, one of the farthest affluents of the Amazon. The wedge enclosed by these lines, pointing towards the great Andes which bend ever away to follow the blue Pacific coast, constitutes the territory of Acre.

Every drop of water that falls throughout this district, and indeed for many thousands of miles around, must come at last, be it as rushing cataract or placid stream, to swell the volume of the Amazon. The paths which these streams have cut in order to join their mighty parent are the only practical highways known. Unless land routes are constantly traversed and cleared, they soon become lost beneath the untiring inroads of the tropic vegetation. So it comes about that to-day, even as in the times of the Conquistadores, travellers journey to and fro by the medium of the moving road, save where the rapids force them to make a portage. Such interruptions to the journey are, from the nature of the country, both costly and frequent, for the average river of the Brazilian central highlands, before it emerges into the Amazon valley, resembles in its general character a glorified trout-stream.

The lure that led latter-day explorers first to penetrate and afterwards to settle in these isolated hinterlands was not gold, but its modern equivalent on the Amazon, rubber. The trader of to-day searches amid the vegetation of the steaming forest for groves where the slender bole of the rubber-tree waves its high head and graceful foliage. From Brazil comes more than two-thirds of the rubber used in the commercial world. The exports during the year 1900 reached twenty-six thousand tons, with a net value of £4,000,000 sterling. Most of this product is transhipped into ocean-going vessels at the Port of Para, which is situated on the main branch of the Amazon delta and commands the entrance to that inland sea. A thousand miles up-stream on a hog's-back of alluvial washed down by the Rio Negro, the Amazon's main northern tributary, stands Manaus, round whose name lingers still some glamour of the old-time legends. For Manaus is the collecting-point for the up-country rubber, brought down by raft and steamer, in cumbrous Noah's arks and crazy dug-outs; floated, carried, driven through cataract, swamp and forest, till after travail unspeakable it is piled high in the great warehouses. And of every variety which the merchant receives, that on which he sets the greatest store, the toughest and purest of all, is the red rubber of Acre.

As is well known, rubber is converted into its commercial form from the sap of a tree, the *hevea Brasiliensis* of the botanists. The plant attains its greatest perfection on alluvial flats where, sheltered from high winds and amply irrigated by periodic floods, it absorbs the full stimulus of the tropic sun. Its sap rises during a growing period of six months, when it may be tapped at any time without sensibly affecting

the vitality of the tree. The only tools used in this work are a small wedge-shaped hatchet, a number of small tin cups and a large pail or calabash. Laden with this primitive outfit the rubber-gatherer arrives at the scene of his labours, where the trees are scattered thinly through primeval forest. The tree is ringed with a series of upward cuts through its bark, great care being taken not to injure the woody core, between which and its outer cover the sap runs. He then attaches the tin cup below the incision in such a way as to catch the milky, viscous fluid. When a sufficient number of trees have been so treated, the labourer goes round again and emptying the contents of the tin cups into the calabash carries it back to the clearing where he has built his hut. On the following day a fresh series of cuts is made somewhat lower down the trunk of the tree, and so on until the flow is exhausted and fresh groves must be sought. In order to dry out the milk a fire made of palm-nuts is preferred, but when these are not procurable certain other hard woods are sought. A funnel is set over the fire while a paddle-shaped stick is dipped in the sap and revolved in the hot smoke that pours out of the opening. When the liquid portion has thus been dried out, only the fibrine or true caoutchouc remains. This process is continued until a large cake is collected on the paddle. The rubber is now in a marketable state, and one of the chief points on which a rubber-merchant must possess expert knowledge is the proportion of water still contained in the parcels of produce submitted to him. It is imperative that all the milk gathered from the trees should be treated during the same day, as its quality rapidly deteriorates on exposure to air.

All these methods are primitive in

the extreme and require little or no skill in their operation. Yet the work is not only well but extravagantly paid, for there are but few who can endure it. The gatherer must often work all day in water, wading breast-deep across the marshy lands which separate the rubber groves. As a consequence malaria is almost inevitable. There is a further chance of its complication by diseases indigenous to the region, such as elephantiasis and beri-beri, and for this last the only known cure lies in a speedy departure. The yearly mortality among Europeans in the Acre region is close upon fifty per cent., and even native-born Brazilians, who from their habits of temperance enjoy a greater immunity from disease, can rarely be tempted to brave its dangers.

The one human exception who seems to thrive in the Acre hinterlands is the native of Ceara, a province lying on the coast between Pernambuco and Para. The fierce droughts which afflict this region have driven the squatter population to the hills, on whose slopes flows a constant water-supply and where rubber may also be found, albeit of inferior quality. At heart an Indian, the Cearense speaks the Guarani patois which is the common heritage of all river tribes south of the Amazon, although on occasion he can make shift with the Portuguese of his half-breed forefathers. His food is pounded maize, fish and mandioca; his luxuries a mouthful of aguardiente and a cigarette. He dresses in a hat and a shirt, and when he travels his equipment consists of a hammock and a chopping-knife. Skilled in the simple lore of the forest and inured to its hardships, he welcomes the lot of rubber gatherer and thrives in it. Thus it has come about that the rubber

industry in Acre depends for its labour upon this district, and each year contractors come hither down the coast in search of workers. A substantial sum is handed to those who offer themselves, destined theoretically for the support of their families during their absence, but spent more frequently in a preliminary orgy. The men are now shipped off and bound over for the season to the traders on the up-river stations. Their scale of pay depends entirely on the amount of rubber that they are able to collect and prepare, and during all this time they are obliged to purchase their necessities at the trader's store. The final settling-up is usually the signal for another long bout of dissipation. Then the gatherer returns to his own home, rich in a new hat and a roll of print, elastic-sided boots, cheap scent and a gramophone or a revolver, according to his varying tastes and means. So long as the rubber trade flourished this simple routine worked without a hitch. The workers went away on pay-day, stuffing their belts full of good sovereigns. The traders acquired easy fortunes, and, far away, the pneumatic-tired bicycle overran the face of every civilised land.

Into this commercial Arcadia came, like a bolt from the blue, the advent of Galvez, first and only President of the year-old Republic of Acre. Like the old freebooters who preceded him into the west, Galvez hailed from a Spanish port. His early record is somewhat obscure, but we gather that in the beginning of the nineties he determined, in company with some hundred of his compatriots, to seek in the Argentine Republic the fortune denied him by the land of his birth. He had chosen an unfortunate moment for his venture. Argentina was suffering from a severe financial crisis and had her own affairs to

attend to; and so during the few years of his residence in the Plate, where he followed the humble but necessary profession of a barber, Galvez seems to have met with little luck and less appreciation. With the true adventurer's spirit—for the man is a born gambler—we find him soon resolved to seek fortune elsewhere. Taking ship at Monte Video he proceeded by easy stages up the Brazils. In succession he halted at all the towns clustered at the foot of the big hills along that magic coast, which look ever for fortune to come to them across the ocean, while they turn their backs upon the unknown, unexplored interior. As Galvez proceeded discord, like a bird of ill-omen, attended his path. The political passions which had slumbered for a time after the expulsion of the Emperor Dom Pedro the Second, broke out at last in an open rebellion among the southern states of Parana and Rio Grande, smouldering and blazing alternately for five long years. In South America the professions of gambling and of politics have much in common. Galvez applied himself to their joint study with the ardour born of conviction and opportunity. At Para however a new factor had to be reckoned with. Folk there care little for the dead bones of the old Empire; little even for the troubles of the new Federation, save where they touch the interests of the great product which has vitalised the whole of the Amazon—rubber. The person who cannot take an interest in the one topic which, directly or indirectly, affects every soul of the population settled in the territory had better turn back. But our adventurer held on, and as he ascended the broad flood his mind found in these new surroundings much food for reflection. As a consequence of those reflections

we find him in 1897 occupying a position in the Bolivian custom-house at Port Alonso, established just above the junction of the Acre river with the upper Amazon.

The total output of rubber from Bolivia is some three thousand tons, of which more than two-thirds find an outlet by this river. Concessions for working blocks of rubber-bearing lands are granted to applicants on the payment of a small yearly rental. The main revenue however to which Bolivia looks from this source comes from the tax levied on exported rubber, which amounts to twenty-two per cent. of its net market value. Towards the end of 1898, when rubber was worth from three shillings and sixpence to four shillings per pound, the income which Acre rubber gave to Bolivia exceeded £150,000. This sum was collected, much to the dissatisfaction of the traders, at the custom-house of Port Alonso. The post which thus upheld the rights and privileges of Bolivian territory counted only forty men. Moreover the distance between the little settlement and its base of government, though short in count of miles, was long when reckoned in time. From the city of La Paz, which stands near Lake Titicaca on the high Bolivian plateau, there is no practicable overland route to Acre. It is quicker, and a good deal safer, to take the sea-route (some ten thousand miles round the Horn and up the Amazon) than to trust any communication to that seven hundred miles of short cut. Possessed of these facts, it is not difficult to follow Galvez's next move. His plan was simple as it was effective—to abolish the customs. Thus the rubber-duties, at present lavished on a distant and unheeding Government, would remain, as was but right and natural, in the pockets of the traders who risked

their lives to get the rubber. It would be some time before the outside world knew what was going on in this isolated region, and when the news leaked out Brazil would not interfere and Bolivia could not. And then—but at this point it is to be feared that Galvez's imagination ran riot.

The idea of Bolivia, cramped and confined as she is, giving accidental birth to a republic yet more forlorn than herself seems, as we discuss it calmly here, fantastic enough. It was otherwise with the men who dwelt in that tropic land, whose wealth was palpable before their eyes and whose exuberance ran riot in their veins. Ignorant, self-confident, and gamblers all, they were easily led away by the tempting lure of self-government. The project was eagerly discussed in the traders' huts during the hot siesta hour. The Indian gatherers wove it into their chanteys as they paddled away upstream into the heart of the teeming wilderness. Galvez was assisted in all this preliminary propaganda by one Utoff—a piece of cosmopolitan driftwood cast up, like his leader, on these shores of circumstance. On February 2nd, 1899, these two collected some twenty traders with their dependants and Indian followers, perhaps four hundred men all told. Led by Galvez they descended on Señor Ibarra, the official in charge of the little customs station. If there was any preliminary parley it has not come to light. The entire settlement was wiped out; all books and documents were destroyed. The one link that bound Acre to Bolivia was gone.

The proclamation heralding the birth of the new Republic is a remarkable one. In its defiance to tyranny, in the ingenious argument whereby the whole future of the human race is involved with that of Acre, it yields to no document of the kind since the

signing of the Magna Charta. In those paragraphs which deal with purely local matters, we learn that Señor Galvez consented to undertake the arduous duties of President and that, in accordance with the aspirations of a united people, there would be no more rubber-duties to pay.

As that astute gentleman had foreseen, it was some time before news of these events filtered to the outside world and longer still before Acre politics were taken seriously. It was not till November of the year 1899, that the non-arrival of the rubber-money in Bolivia and a corresponding deficit in the exchequer brought their painful significance home to Bolivian statesmen. A column of two hundred troops of the line was at once despatched across country to restore order. This force, equipped in hot haste, was lacking in every essential which could make it effective. The only guidance which its leaders had as to the route they must follow was the direction taken by running water. At times this route lay in the gorge of some treacherous watercourse; at others it had to be painfully hewn, step by step, through the dense forest.

After struggling along for four months the column had only accomplished half its journey, and it had lost half its men. The remainder, their ammunition spent or thrown away, themselves living on wild fruits and the products of the chase, sent back to ask not for help but rescue. The gravity of the task was now apparent. A new expedition of six hundred and fifty men was despatched after the first land column, while further troops were embarked to bring help up the Amazon and also to cut off supplies from the insurgents from that side. The tactics which Galvez had adopted were those of incessant and harassing



guerilla warfare. In this he was reinforced by large numbers of the rubber-gatherers, nearly all of whom, be it noted, were Brazilian subjects. Chief among his allies, however, must be reckoned the deadly climate. Of the total of eight hundred and fifty Bolivian troops who took part in these cross-country expeditions but half managed to struggle through the fever-laden swamps, and of these survivors again only two hundred lived to see the blue ocean.

While these events were toward in Acre, their effects were already beginning to be felt elsewhere. The necessity of maintaining a supply of raw material for the needs of the rubber industry had led some time before to the formation of a company styled the Anglo-American Rubber Syndicate, which had made formal contract with the Bolivian Government for the lease of a portion of the now disputed territory. Upon the payment of a fixed annual sum it was agreed that the company was to administer and develop those tracts of rubber-bearing country to which titles had not been previously granted, such local administration being subject always to the suzerainty of the Bolivian Government. This contract was sealed and signed at the time of the Galvez outbreak, but the disturbed state of the country prevented steps being taken to put it into practical effect. This, speaking broadly, was unfortunate for the syndicate, for in Amazonas possession is something more than nine-tenths of the law. When news of the agreement made by Bolivia in regard to Acre became known to the rubber world of Para and Manaus it caused great excitement, especially at the latter spot, where politics and commerce are most intimately mixed. It was not long before the views of politicians here began to be reflected

in the federal capital, in the columns of the Brazilian *Jingo* press.

The political preponderance of Brazil in America is due in the main to her huge bulk. She is the unexplored, undeveloped Russia of the south. Civilisation extends only along a fringe of her coastline and by the banks of the navigable rivers. She looks to foreign enterprise and capital for her internal development, bestirring herself but little in that matter, for she relies confidently on the unearned increment which as time wears on must of necessity accrue to an area of fertile land which is greater, if we exclude Alaska, than that of the United States. No other country more fully appreciates the strong position of the ground landlord. It is curious to trace the beginnings of this policy. As soon as the discovery of a new world had been announced by Columbus, both Spain and Portugal appealed to the Pope to determine their respective claims to its possession. In reply Alexander the Sixth, by a Bull dated May 4th, 1493, granted all newly discovered western lands to Spain, while it was understood that everything east of them should belong to Portugal. This imaginary boundary, a line drawn from pole to pole, passed one hundred miles west of the Azores, but in the following year the Portuguese monarch applied for its revision. It was consequently shifted eleven hundred miles further west and passing now through New Hispania, as the West Indies were named, came out through the southern continent somewhere about the River Plate. Thus Portugal gained at one stroke a million square miles of territory at the expense of her ancient rival and the Empire of Brazil was founded. Coming to more recent times, a dispute over the Venezuelan frontier of the Guayanas resulted in a gain to

Brazil of a hundred thousand square miles, and she is still bickering elsewhere in that direction. In 1867 a provisional boundary treaty signed between Brazil, Peru and Bolivia ceded a considerable portion of the latter to this jealous neighbour, while in the south she has during the last decade laid hands on ten thousand square miles of the territory of Misiones, an outlying corner of the Argentine Republic.

With such traditions to guide her it will be seen that the affair at Acre offered Brazil an opportunity too tempting to resist. The point fixed upon was the clause in the syndicate's contract, whereby it was empowered by Bolivia to lease *and administer* a portion of the sacred South American soil. The further clause exacting a large rent for this privilege was brushed aside as an unworthy subterfuge. The Munroe doctrine was preached *in excelsis*. "By this contract," so runs a late official note, "the Bolivian Government has granted foreigners powers to administer a region inhabited solely by Brazilians. This contract is a monstrosity in law, seeing that it entails a partial alienation of sovereignty made to a foreign company without international standing. This is a concession resembling concessions in Africa. It is unworthy of our continent!"

The prospect of private gain will add fervour to even the purest patriotism. A squadron of five Brazilian vessels was at once despatched to the Acre river, with instructions to put down all resistance and bring back the latest news. This force anticipated the Bolivian contingent and caught the new Republic napping. Although he was at the time prostrated with an attack of beri-beri, it must be admitted that Galvez rose to the occasion. Borne on board one of

the invading vessels as a prisoner, the unfailing impudence which is his main asset turned the occasion into a council of war. Summoning all his eloquence he represented Acre as an independent state, flying from the oppression of Bolivia to the protecting arms of Brazil. Other arguments of a private but equally convincing nature are hinted at. Be that as it may, the new President returned to his anxious citizens with the news that they were now the firm allies of Brazil, while the gunboats steamed away to Manaus to transmit the same intelligence by wire to the federal Government at Rio. A prompt message at once empowered the Amazonas' executive to "co-operate with the authorities at Acre in restoring order," and thus incidentally to establish a lien on that territory. On March 17th, 1900, an arrangement was come to whereby Galvez gave the Brazilian forces peaceful possession of sundry mud villages and Remington rifles and received in exchange a considerable sum of money to be distributed among the traders—"for indemnisation of supplies and for unpaid salaries of employees up to this date." A strong remonstrance against the syndicate was at the same time handed in to Bolivia by Brazil.

Although the autonomy of Acre had been preserved to it for a while by these prompt measures, its President was aware that the deluge must soon come, and cherished the resolve that by the time it came he himself would be gone. The Bolivian troops had at last emerged from the interior in the worst of tempers and bent on showing their disregard for the subtleties of Acre's politics by steady rifle-practice at her citizens. His health was fast breaking down and such arguments were little to his taste. He summoned a meeting of

the traders, to whom he explained the dangers of their position. Although they had secured the temporary protection of Brazil it was necessary to protect their independence even should that ally desert them. At present they were at the mercy of any tug-boat which chose to blockade the mouth of the Acre river. More arms, more ammunition, and above all a couple of river steamers were urgently needed. If they would provide the sinews of war, Galvez, in spite of his ill-health, would undertake to fetch up these necessities from Para. At this point in the proceedings Señor Utoff, Minister of the Interior and general handy man, arose and collected subscriptions. It was eighteen months since any rubber-duties had been paid, and during all this time the traders had pushed on their work at a cent-per-cent. profit. By playing on their fears for future profits and pointing to his recent success,—the mild answer which had averted the wrath of the Brazilian squadron,—Galvez extracted from the confiding merchants a sum which, incredible as it may seem, amounted to no less than £70,000 sterling. Then bearing all the hopes of Acre's future and most of the ready money of its citizens he embarked once more on the broad Amazon, this time "waters downward" as the local idiom has it. The additional force which Bolivia had despatched by the sea-route was easily avoided. At its periodic season of flood the Amazon each year makes fresh cuts through the banks of soft alluvium which bound it. In such backwaters a vessel may navigate for days parallel to the main stream, yet hidden from it by the growth of a virgin forest. Galvez journeyed successfully past Manaos, arriving in due time at the ocean port of Para.

Here we have to record a circum-

stance which finally sealed the fate of the new-fledged Republic and which the warmest admirers of its late President have never been able to explain. He bought no river-boats, nor Mauser rifles, nor any other armament. He merely banked the £70,000 in his own name and took the first boat to Spain.

The attitude of Bolivia with regard to Acre has, in a diplomatic sense, been correct throughout. She claims that her boundaries were definitely settled by the treaty of 1867 and that its details have been amplified by various surveying parties despatched by her since for that purpose. She is surprised that either Brazil or Peru should still have any doubts on this subject. She has a perfect right to establish a customs post in her own territory, at Port Alonso or elsewhere, and to levy duties on the rubber exported from Acre down the Amazon, a river which is free to the navigation of all nations. Acting on this right she has leased the administration of the Acre district to a responsible syndicate under an arrangement which, while it affects no sovereign rights, will give better satisfaction to all concerned—including Brazil. A slight local disturbance, about which has arisen some foolish talk of a new republic, has alone prevented this contract from being carried into effect. Bolivia is grieved that Brazil should have been led away by the acts of these unauthorised persons, on whom a punitive force will shortly impose order. Finally, while denying grounds for any foreign claim upon the territory of Acre, Bolivia is willing to submit the whole question to any impartial tribunal. The weak point in all this argument is that Bolivia can neither put down the Acre trouble nor force Brazil to arbitrate. Her army consists of raw, half-Indian levies, unused to foreign

service and furnished with an equipment long out of date. She has no ships, no money, and no credit. Her only real hope is based on the justice of her claims and the ethics of international law. If these fail her she must look abroad for help, and in the light of their Venezuelan experience European powers, once bitten, will be twice shy of interfering.

The question of Acre is in truth a difficult one. Yet so far as the outer world is concerned the pith of the matter lies, not in who holds the title-deeds, but in how the territory is administered. The day is long past when Nigeria and New Spain, Pekin and Peru, were mere incidents in a hieroglyphic map, bestrewn with uncouth monsters and full-rigged ships. The fabled wonders of yesterday are the tourist attractions of to-day, and since steam and electricity have girdled the world they have rendered it more sensitive to the well-being of its component parts. Isolation is no longer an excuse for misgovernment. Each year forces a higher responsibility, a sense of civicism, upon nations as upon individuals. By results only can a people justify its title to possession, for in the beginning those possessions were given, a common gift, to the wide world of man. If they palter with their trust they will some day be arraigned before the bar of posterity, and no parchment treaty, no hair-splitting diplomacy, will condone their fault or save their stewardship from passing into abler hands.

We get one more glimpse of the irrepressible Galvez, whose passion for gambling dissipated in a year the sum confided to him by his late fellow-citizens. Thus thrown again upon his own resources, his feet naturally sought the path which they had trod before with such marked success. During a second visit to Buenos Ayres

in April, 1902, the more sensational press of that city gave him some notoriety, extolling his "virile personality" as typical of a race which had secured to the Latin nations the dominion of the South American continent. His business methods however were viewed with distrust, and a diligent canvass in the ranks of his admirers only yielded the sum of two thousand paper dollars, with which he sailed forthwith, to install Acre once more in her place among the nations. But Acre had passed for ever from his shifty grasp. It is possible that he sought to combine with his patriotic schemes one of blackmail on Manaos, for whose Government he had all along been a catspaw. This theory would at least account for the disfavour with which his reappearance was unanimously viewed. A Brazilian gunboat overtook him long before he had reached his goal, and his present address, with a vagueness that fits the region, is given as "up the river." Marooned on the shores of some far-off tributary, it is to be hoped that he reflects with philosophy upon the restrictions which hedge about a political reformer on the Upper Amazons.

Meanwhile the trade of Acre is dead. Brazil holds the key of export navigation, and until her claim for an extension of territory is granted it is not likely that she will release it. The Bolivian troops occupy a few scattered posts, and their authority extends just so far as a rifle-bullet can penetrate into the dense forest. The whole region, from the Madeira river to the foot of the Andes, is in a state of open anarchy, and each trading adventurer, fighting with his followers for his own hand, does that which seems good in his own eyes.

W. S. BARCLAY.

## THE GOLDEN VALE.

THE motto of the Province of Munster should be *sic vos non vobis*. Its people breed many cattle for the English market, and many children for the United States. Tillage does not pay, and grazing farms give employment to very few hands. In many English counties grazing is replacing tillage, but the peasantry find work and sorrow in the English towns. There are few industries in Ireland, and the superfluous sons and daughters still cross the Atlantic. Politicians aver that the fat kine are eating up the lean people, but farmers, however patriotic, are not altruists, and by the rearing of cattle much money can be made with small labour. In early Ireland, when Iseult lived in her tower at Chapelizod, and Sir Cauline fell in love with Christabelle, the kerne, the earth-tillers were despised as slaves; the dignity of labour is a Teutonic, not a Celtic conception. Irish annals are a record of bloodshed and miracles, not of enduring toil. No Celtic Virgil sang of reaping folk and sowing. The Irish would only have hearkened to such an one in his most unlovely mood, the catalogue of casualties:

Ortygium Cæneus, victorem Cænea  
Turnus,  
Turnus Itym Cloniumque Dioxippum  
Promolumque  
Et Sagarim et summis stantem pro  
turribus Idan.

Further, bullocks and heifers do not need so much sun as wheat and barley, while grass grows under grey skies and soft rain. The Irishman rarely pipes to the tune of which the

old cow died. The richer grazing lands of Munster will not be tilled so long as men shall prefer the splendid shilling to the inglorious sixpence. When Queen Elizabeth had hunted down the Desmonds, and made so many hempen widows, the historians tell us that the lowing of a cow was not to be heard from Valentia to the Rock of Cashel. Nature has long since redressed the Lord Deputy's actions, and Munster rears more cattle for its acres than any other district in the British Isles. Cromwell reaped the field again, but he planted where he reaped. His English settlers held their own against the Celts, fought with much loss against the Protestant Bishops, and in time those that remained found that the rich pastures were well worth a mass. Very few of the Independent or Presbyterian planter-families have held out to the end against their Roman Catholic neighbours and the Episcopal dignitaries. Even Dean Swift hated Presbyterians more than Roman Catholics; he feared the former, and despised the latter. He compared the Roman Catholics to a lion fast bound with three or four chains, his teeth drawn out, and his claws pared to the quick, and the Presbyterians to an angry cat in full liberty at his throat. Many stout Presbyterians were driven to America, long years before the famine. Now the Church Triumphant has become the Church Disestablished.

The Golden Vale of Tipperary, the richest land in Ireland, must look much the same as when Cromwell marched from Cahir to Clonmel, and

took that town after a great fight; "they found in Clonmel the stoutest Enemy this Army had ever met in Ireland; and there was never seen so hot a storm of so long continuance, and so gallantly defended, either in England or Ireland." Within two miles of Tipperary town, on the border of Thomond and Desmond, is the Glen of Aherlow, lying between the Tipperary hills and the lofty Galtys; through it the river Aherlow runs to join the Suir. It is better known in the United States than in England. Thousands of children there learn of its beauty who will never see the Golden Vale, but are taught by fond lips of parents, who "in death will remember sweet Argos."

If we walk from Tipperary down the Glen we pass over the best part of the best land in the country, under mountains which the eye will always remember. It is a land of big cattle and big men. The Tipperary men are the tallest in the British Islands, and have a great name for kicking and hurling. The reason may be that nowhere has the Celtic blood more thoroughly intermingled with the English; the same cross has produced some very big men in Scotland. The "planters" took Irish wives, and their descendants have Irish ways and the Irish faith, but in their larger bones and broader shoulders the English descent can be traced. One more legacy the Cromwellians left. They taught the natives English, and the lesson has never been forgotten. The brogue of to-day merely renders the ordinary pronunciation of English in the seventeenth century. Fashions have changed in England, but here English is spoken as Milton or Waller spoke it. The people have not the English tradition of comfort; they do no work beyond what is necessary,

for fear, perhaps, lest they be scourged to nothing with perpetual motion. We shall pass one farm-house after another, some of them held by men farming many acres, and we shall see no garden, no orchard, no flowers near the white-washed walls of the house, always the trampled mud and the manure-heap under the windows. When white-wash is fresh it is unpleasant to the eye, and when old still more unpleasant. It never agrees with anything; it seems to express the whole dissidence of dissent.

Flowers and fruit do finely in Tipperary, where continually bowers of flowers encounter showers, but orchards hardly exist, and fruit is rare upon the table, unless we consider that to many a banquet, as of old at the Peleian feast, comes the Abominable, the Uninvited, and casts discord's golden fruit upon the board. The wild flowers care nothing for neglect. Every bank in spring is yellow with primroses. The wasteful double banks which divide field from field, of which it has been said that you "climb down nine feet and fall the rest," show flowers nearly all the year; those with a southern aspect are natural conservatories. The black-thorn flowers before the primrose dares, the whitethorn whitens the May landscape, and in September, the one is livid with sloes and the other red with hips. Honeysuckle twists and breathes among the tangled branches. Its season is over, and the mountain-ash is red as blood. The blackberries, to be sure, are not getting enough sunshine, and after St. Michael's day the devil puts his foot on them. But one thing is lacking; the common sweet violet is rare in Ireland, and I cannot remember ever to have seen one growing wild. The scent of violets always takes my mind back to bitter spring days in



North Yorkshire, when the east wind would roughen the face and assault the eyes. There was a spot on the great North Road, close to the Tees, where you smelt the faint perfume fifty yards before you reached the camp of the tiny purple battalions. Yet the scentless violet grows freely here; it abounds on the Tipperary hills; as for the blue-bells, in their season you can see the huge blue patches of them a mile away.

It is a fair September day. Rain is no farther away than the summits of the Galtys, and may drive at any moment over the plain; the dry season will come between St. Luke's day and Martinmas. The foot-hills are only a thousand feet high, and their tops are clear, but Galty More is heavily cloud-capped, and storms have doubtless been sweeping all day down the Glen of Aherlow. Cross the railway-line down which dawdle the trains between Limerick and Waterford. The embankments are famous places for primroses, and the trains may be said, literally as well as metaphorically, to take the primrose path. However, no one going to Limerick or Waterford is likely to be in a hurry to arrive at either place, and anyone leaving them to go elsewhere can settle in the carriage and realise his gracious state. We can pass straight over the meadows of the river Ara to the hills, heavy walking in heavy grass, or along devious and muddy bohereens. It is the choice between clean water and dirty water. Yet the bohereen has charms of its own. It is a narrow lane between high hedges, and there is a world of botanising on either side of it. In ancient times its width was carefully set down. "Two cows fit upon it, one lengthwise, the other athwart, and their calves and yearlings fit on it along with them." County surveyors were more patient in those

days, but made just as bad roads. Whether we take fields or road we must come under a pine-fledged hill, one of the Tipperary range, on whose top is a huge cross, built of railway sleepers and stayed by rails, unshaken by the stormiest Atlantic gale. It stands only a thousand feet above sea-level, but the cross can be seen nearly as far as the hill, standing like some *muezzin* against the sky. A recent writer has pointed out that the Irish people have their eyes fixed on the next world throughout life, to the neglect of their duty in this world, whereas "Come unto me, ye weary, and I will give you rest" does not preclude labour to the end. A consideration of this might hinder new Land Bills, especially if such study were fortified by the perusal of a page or two dealing with the ancient Gauls, in Mommsen's *HISTORY OF ROME*.

Though the wayfarer, bound to the Glen of Aherlow, must cross the Tipperary hills, he need not go over the topmost peak and down again like a Roman road. A path will take him up among the young firs and larches to a gap, or nek, from which a long sloping descent leads into the Glen. The undergrowth is shaking and glancing with the scurrying rabbits, whose numbers defy poachers. There is no other game about. Irishmen prefer a bird in the hand to any number in the bush. In many places the extremity of poverty might be avoided if the game were left alone, and plutocrats came to shoot. The merry brown hare rarely leaps in Tipperary. Hares are nowhere so common in Ireland as in England; the Irish hare really belongs to the Arctic variety, but there is no hard winter weather to whiten his coat. There are no grouse here, and partridges would find little to eat where the farmers grow no cereals except a few oats for home

use. When you reach the gap, the view into the glen is fine. Our valley is about the same length as Peneian Tempe, five or six miles, and about two wide, but the mass and height of the Galtys facing you seem to annihilate the intervening distance. Beneath the sun, suddenly adventurous, the mountains look black, and the green colour of the fields is as bright as that of young larches in spring. The jutting hills on the further side rise above three thousand feet. Behind them, unseen, are the Knockmealdowns, and beyond them the coast of Waterford and Cork, a wild country where the mountain-men live, in which the King's writ did not run till our fathers' time. The rapparees held their own in it; if anyone, in these milder days, wishes to make poteen undisturbed, he will never find a more "suitable locality for a large country trade." In Ireland it is the queer place where you cannot get whisky, lawful and not, and be served by the Angel of the Darker Drink. One and all say with FitzGerald,

I wonder often what the Vintners buy  
One half so precious as the stuff they  
sell.

Tipperary town lies behind us to the north, and looking north-west we can see the hills which fence the valley of the Shannon. The town now contains six thousand people, and covers a large space; *Troja fuit*. The citadel of sacred Pergamus was once crowned by a castle, now it bears more easily a hotel. On lower ground, close to the clear-flowing Simois, is a huge mass of barracks, never empty, for Limerick Junction, three miles away, is the key to the railway system of southern Ireland. To the right, within a mile, is the little Protestant church of Kilshane, a chapel-of-ease,

which has a chime and plays old-fashioned tunes sweetly. Such bells Enoch Arden heard on his tropical island, and Kinglake heard before him in the East. On a Sunday afternoon in winter the cruel north wind brings healing on its wings; it bears to the climber's tingling ears the "mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells," playing some simple hymn-tune. They are a plaintive oxymoron, sad and pleasing, suiting the great silence from which they issue. The tunes are in the minor key; *o si sic omnia*. The blatant confidence of some hymns is distressing; the older writers are not arrogant enough for this generation. We had our harvest thanksgiving the other day; the appointed hymns of rejoicing seemed all to ring false; those of jubilee, of loud certainty, are worse. They try with shouting to cover the secret footsteps of the Shadow feared by man. Perhaps they are meet for crowded worshippers in prosperous English churches. I prefer to hear the Kilshane bells beat slowly on the north wind, "Abide with me, fast falls the even-tide."

Straight opposite, high among the hills, is the lake from which cold and pure water comes into Tipperary town. From this mountain tarn, which is considerable in size, sixty swallows rise every spring, tied together by a silver chain round their necks. They fly down the valley until they come to a certain rock, against which they dash the chain, and are free. Is it not a pity that Gilbert White of Selborne did not know this story? He would have found in it the proof, for which he longed, that swallows hibernate at the bottom of lakes. The Irish legends are always such as this. The Celtic genius cannot abide the *mania mundi*, the atmosphere of material fact that surrounds the earth. The fanciful stories at which Englishmen smile in a pitying manner are

the revolt against the monotonous common-sense of daily life. Is it wonderful that this people did not become Protestant? The beliefs against which the reformers protested are the food of their soul. The country, to the countrymen, is even now filled with supernatural beings; the place-names everywhere testify to the existence of fairies and demons. The old name of the Rock of Cashel, a dozen miles away from us, was Sheerim (fairy ridge), and down Clonmel way the famous Slievenamon mountain was the palace of the fairies, the "good people" of euphemism, less kindly than their sisters the Oreads. The Pooka, Shakespeare's Puck, has left his name all over Ireland. I have forgotten the name of that most malignant spirit who sits on gate-posts, waiting for you. Most of the names are full of fancy and poetry, all are euphonious. Clonmel is the "meadow of honey," and Tipperary, the "well of Ara," is pleasant to the ear, at least of Irishmen. Near the Pale you find hideous names such as Harristown, Johnstown, denoting places which are towns in no accepted meaning of the word. Possibly the settlers named single farmhouses *towns*, after the old Scotch fashion. Who would not rather live in a place with a name like Gortnafurra, here in the Glen, than in Hull or Stoke? The names are long and sweet, explaining carefully the nature of the place. They remind me of a verse in Isaiah, "Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, at the end of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field." That topographical definition might well be the name of an Irish village.

An ever-abiding charm about the Glen of Aherlow is its stillness. From the dark fen the oxen's low comes to you, but there is no sound of men. The quiet of slow-moving

time is over Ireland. Not here can one say *dies truditur die*; here season softly lapses into season. There is no fierce rush of work as in an English harvest, when men and women barter their strength for immediate gold, but cows are milked, the milk is taken to the creamery, the calves are fed; no one is careful about many things. As in Virgil's time, the herd goes to town with the milk, and for many this is the day's work. Daphnis and Damœtas rise betimes, don the tunic, bind fair sandals beneath their shining feet, and drive an ass-cart to the nearest Co-operative Creamery. The farmers' wives no longer use the churn, or go to market with butter and eggs and a pound of cheese. England hears so much of agrarian troubles in Ireland that people do not realise how peaceful the country is. Trouble comes from the men who live by trouble, who feed the people with wormwood and make them live upon gall. It may be that decent folk are wearying of them; "they have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready, but none goeth to the battle." Their appeal is largely to vanity. Conceive the pride of a small farmer, member of a District Council, when the local paper publishes his resolution commending the Boers or the Mad Mullah to God, and lamenting "the hideous presence of the Saxon in our own fair isle." Thersites feels himself the shepherd of the people, an Agamemnon or Parnell, for indeed "a dream about a shadow is man; yet when some god-given splendour falls, a glory of light comes over him and life is sweet." Pindar may abide such desecration of his stately verse, for Pindar himself was a Greek "pro-Boer," and repented the same all the days of his life. I feel mild wonder that the forward party in Ireland has not been nicknamed "The Resolutionary Party." An abundance of

resolutions proves a lack of resolution. Indeed, every Irishman knows rebellion cannot be; the people would not stir if Humbert and Hoche were to come again.

The sun-burst has waved before now over the tall mountaineers of Tipperary, for the Normans, if history lies not, were in 1190 routed in the valley beneath our feet. The Munster war-song opens with an address to the defeated,

Can the depths of the ocean afford you  
not graves,  
That you come thus to perish afar o'er  
the waves—  
To redden and swell the wild torrents  
that flow  
Through the valley of vengeance, the  
dark Aherlow?

The clangor of conflict o'erburthens the  
breeze  
From the stormy Slieve Bloom to the  
stately Galtees;  
Your caverns and torrents are purple  
with gore,  
Slievenamon, Glen Colaich, and sublime  
Galtee More.

Somehow or other, the poetry of the NATION recalls the GRADUS AD PARNASSUM. But Mangan will survive, and perhaps Davis, when many are forgotten. The battle which the war-song commemorates can have had no abiding influence, for Galbally, at the western end of the glen, means English Town. It was settled by the FitzGerald at a very early period, as Tipperary was held by William Burgh, or Burke, who left the name Clanwilliam to future ages. For the natives have always been *bellipotentis magis quam sapientipotentis*. As Jeremiah asketh, "Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?"

We will turn our backs on Galbally, and walk down the valley to Bansha, which is, being interpreted, the "level spot covered with grass." Our valley weeps more often than it smiles.

After the Reeks the Galtys must be the condensers-in-chief of Ireland. Four days out of five they take the wind from out the sweet south sliding. Shakespeare's curious dislike of the south wind is not shared by Irishmen, to whom a southerly wind and cloudy sky mean home, sweet home. The villages that smoulder and glitter in the plain can see the mountains flinging rain upon the dark Aherlow. On showery days waterspouts form and fade upon the mountains. So the Glen roads are most often soft, and the wayfarer does all that human effort can ever do, he moves matter from one place to another. The valley is not dark through boundless contiguity of shade. Over large areas Munster is nearly treeless. When compulsory land purchase has been completed the country will be naked to the sky, for groves and woods and forests do not suit peasant proprietors. The spreading chestnut tree and the umbrageous beech occupy ground that would more profitably feed cattle; shelter from the noon-tide heat is unnecessary to the neat-herd. The Tipperary brim of the Glen bristles with young firs and larches, but the Galtys are bare, covered with short grass, full of turf-bogs. All along the valley are green fields, with here and there stubble from which oats have been reaped. In the back end of September there seems grass enough to last till next April, but by the new year the cattle will be hungry. They are not housed in winter, and are fed with hay spread on the grass. The process is wasteful, but at any rate is good for the fields. No fields of barley and of rye on either side the river lie. The Vale of Aherlow is not as the Vale of Camelot, its rainfall is possibly three times as great—what must it have been before the deforesting? In weather like this the rain overtakes

you as a galloping horse overtakes a footman. The top of Galty More suddenly disappears in mist, shadow-streaks of rain stripe the lower sides, and in a minute the Aherlow river is filling again. We do not need to cross it on our way to Bansha, which is lucky, for after heavy rains the stepping-stones are covered, and you must take off boots and stockings and wade. There is a bridge farther down, a swinging-bridge, which makes teetotalers feel drunk, and gives drunkards a foretaste of *locomotor ataxia*; for it is hung on chains, and squirms and wriggles like a snake. In crossing it you can easily become a cause of joy to your enemies, and a casting down of eyes for your friends. It may, in its time, have sent down many gallant souls of heroes to Hades. The glen opens out towards Bansha, and there are fine clumps of trees. Even after tenant ownership, I suppose, some demesnes will be left, and the country children may be taken excursions, like the London waifs, to see the trees. In those days, also, the birds will have "taken a single ticket to Holyhead."

There are plenty of birds yet in Tipperary, although at this season of year most are mute. The robin sings away for half-a-dozen, and I would as lief hear him as thrush or black-bird; perhaps Browning overpraised the thrush's "first fine careless rapture," and the blackbird too soon becomes as full as a schoolboy on Hallowe'en. The rooks and jackdaws are very noisy in the fields; the latter bird will leave the plebeian company which he affects in summer, and will deign to patronise the human race again. The rooks will then receive calls from the Limerick gulls, driven inland twenty miles by the

incessant autumn gales. The magpies fly across our path, and we may cross ourselves half-a-dozen times in five minutes. These bad characters are parvenus, more recent arrivals in Ireland than "the sireless Saxon strangers, London's loutish lords," to quote a modern poet. Along with the missel thrush they came and settled the country at the end of the seventeenth century, about the date of the Great and Glorious Revolution. We have no snipe-bogs, but on the wet cold winter days the plovers lament in company, as is their right. With good reason Tennyson uses their cry to mark the desolation of most desolate scenes: "There let the wind sweep and the plover cry." That cry will be insistent many days in the next six months when one climbs fiercely among the young firs and larches, in the wind that beats the mountain,

When a blanket wraps the day  
When the rotten woodland drips  
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

I do not know whence the pleasure comes on such days, but it does come, perhaps to balance the mental dejection which sometimes spoils the perfect summer's day. It is exhilarating to rise above life's little annoyances. We do not make mountains out of molehills in Ireland, because there are no moles. Even now, Galty More suddenly becomes invisible, the warm rain flies down the glen as the crow flies, and we run into Bansha, a place proudly conscious of being a station on the Limerick and Waterford railway. But they have been cleaning out a drain on the road that leads to the station. Bansha smells.

ERNEST ENSOR.

## THE GIPSY MAID.

THERE's a gipsy and a rover  
 And a queen of all desire,  
 And she tramps the wide world over  
 With a step no time can tire ;  
 But at night she plays the lover  
 By her blazing gipsy fire ;  
 And, when she kneels beside us  
 With her witching words to guide us,  
 Though the mocking world may chide us  
 We shall labour in her hire,  
 Splashing colour on the canvas, striking music on the lyre !

For her dreamful eyes and tender  
 Watch us lovingly and long,  
 Lest a careless line offend her  
 Or a heedless hand go wrong  
 In the picture's perfect splendour  
 Or the setting of the song ;  
 And those warm and watchful glances  
 Bring our hearts the golden fancies  
 That were struck at elfin dances  
 On a bluebell for a gong,  
 Where the fairies faced their partners in the woods, a thousand strong !

We can bring no gift to give her  
 That shall bribe her or disarm,  
 That shall purchase fame for ever  
 Or defend from failure's harm.  
 Save the moonbeams there shall never  
 Any silver cross her palm ;  
 Yet that maid shall lift the bars for us,  
 And horse the ruby cars for us,  
 And rob the steeps and stars for us  
 With sweep of gipsy arm  
 Just to give the sketch its glamour and the simple verse its charm !



*The Gipsy Maid.*

But if we, with fortune laden,  
Should be careless in our pride ;  
If we set that gipsy maiden  
And her golden gifts aside,  
We shall share no moonlit Aiden  
With a laurelled laughing bride ;  
Ere the shades of night are rifted,  
Ere the stars have dreamland-drifted,  
We shall find the tent is lifted  
And the gipsy fire has died,  
And no more we'll meet our maiden in the wan grey world and wide !

WILL H. OGILVIE.

## SOME PRINCIPLES OF POETIC CRITICISM.

It has been said that the critical mind is that which perceives the differences of things, just as the creative mind is that which perceives their similarities; that in the one the analytic understanding, in the other the synthetic imagination, is predominant; and in this, perhaps, there is much truth. The power of clearly seeing the indissoluble unity of things is a distinguishing feature of the intellects not only of the poet, the novelist and the historian, but also of the constructive scientist and philosopher. Thus far the minds of Shakespeare and Bacon, of Darwin and Tennyson, of Kant and Goethe, are alike; they all see the general in the particular. But the artistic mind would seem to be more complex than the philosophic. It also possesses the faculty of reproducing the general under the symbol of the particular. While the constructive scientist expresses a truth in a formula, the constructive artist expresses the same truth as a conception of life. The scientist's language is as exact, as colourless, as human language is capable of being; it does not present a phenomenon, it formulates the law of a class of phenomena. The artist's language on the contrary must sacrifice something of exactness to vividness, and it expresses, or endeavours to express a phenomenon conceived "under the aspect of eternity." The poetic mind again is more complex than the merely artistic, just as the artistic is more so than the scientific. The poet indeed also expresses the general under a presentation of the particular, but in the livelier images

of a more delicate sensibility, in the more vivid conceptions of a more deeply emotional imagination; and his conceptions too assume the regularly rhythmic form which is the natural, the inevitable mould of certain types of thought.

This complexity of the artistic, and still more of the poetic, mind reacts upon the manner in which the actual world affects them. The happiness of man depends upon his suitability to his environment. The simpler his character, the fewer his wants, the more likely he is to be adapted to the fellow-beings who surround him, to the circumstances in which he is placed. This was the truth which underlay Stoic and Epicurean philosophy alike, and inspired the life and much of the verse, of Horace.

*Contracto melius parva cupidine  
vectigalia porrigam,*

he said, indicating in a curiously negative fashion how the world into which he was born, the embryonic decadence of the Augustan age, was ill-suited to satisfy the inner desires of his nature. This complexity then tends to set the poet at variance with the world in which he lives, since it tends to decrease the possibility of his finding material satisfaction for the crying demands of his spirit, and to increase the likelihood of the coarse facts of existence jarring discordantly in contact with his tremulous nerves. And his demands too are of an especial delicacy. His sensibility is of finer temper, his imagination of more vivid, more intense colouring,

than those of ordinary men, so that his dream of happiness, his vision of the beautiful, may not find that approximate material realisation, which a kind fate grants to most, and his only solace lies in his expression of it, in his escape from the Gehenna of the mute. For artist and poet are on a ceaseless quest of Beauty, flying before them like a phantom shore.

And what is Beauty? In Stendhal's subtle words, it is "a promise of happiness." Perhaps then you may say, that the quality of beauty lies in that adaptation of the thing perceived to the mind of the perceiver, which gives happiness through the medium of expression, of realisation, and that happiness thus consists of the perception of the beautiful, the subjectively true, whether in the moral or material world. But yet this only leads one to the paradox that, as ordinary minds are better adapted to this ordinary world of men and women, as their ordinary desires for material things are easier of realisation than are the necessities of the poet for the expression of his delicate yet overpowering emotion, therefore their lives are fuller of happiness and consequently of beauty than his. Fuller of happiness such as they can experience, fuller of the content which perhaps the stalled ox may feel, no doubt—but of beauty, no. Beauty is only a *promise* of happiness, and it is not in the approximate realisation (which the world lacks subtlety to perceive *is* but approximate) that its messages can be felt, but only when it reaches that well-nigh absolute degree of which poetic strength and delicacy are alone capable. To muse constantly on forms of beauty may well give, not happiness, but misery, since the world is so little fitted for the fulfilment of their promise. Nor must we forget that happiness and beauty, too, are only

relative. Which is the more beautiful, the sea boiling in tempestuous rage against some tall granite promontory, or breaking in an undulating filmy line upon far-stretching sands? The tree, with delicate foliage whispering in the twilight breeze, or bare and wonderfully outlined against the pale gold of a winter sunset? Does not the answer depend upon our temperament, perhaps even upon our mood? And what does this mean but our particular need for emotional expression? But the realisation of the most ordinary ideal ever lacks something of imagined perfection, and hence arises the irresistible impulse to seek in the mystic world of dreams the perfected joy man cannot find on earth—a necessity felt as keenly by the Greek in the Vale of Tempe as by the Viking on the gloomy waters of the North. The growth of religions depends, not only on the vain desire to learn the secret of the Hereafter, but on the living need of a happiness not of this world wherein the tortured soul may find repose.

Heaven but the Vision of fulfilled  
Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on  
fire,  
Cast on the Darkness, into which  
Ourselves,  
So late emerged from, shall so soon  
expire.

It is this same need, more and more deeply felt as men's desires grow with the growth of civilisation, that the poet voices in plangent utterances of revolt against the inscrutable destiny of man, saying with Job, "I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me," or telling us of Arthur departing in his gloomy barge with his unfulfilled promise of return.

For it is the poet's peculiar function to express articulately the tragedy of human life. He feels it more deeply

than other men, and he gives his feelings that rhythmic expression which is their natural form, that form without which impassioned thought seems still to lack something of expression. Thus poetry becomes a "criticism of life," easing by giving vent to those sorrows which spring from an experience of its shortcomings. Viewed from this stand-point, are not the objects of tragedy and comedy, of infuriated satire and of fantastic reverie, the same? Is not the only difference one of method? What matters it whether we read the plays of Molière or those of Ford? Whether Sophocles tells the fateful story of the House of Thebes, or Aristophanes girds at the Athenian democracy and its mock heroes? Whether we listen to the imprecations of Juvenal or the plaintive melancholy of Virgil? Whether Spenser consoles by leading us into a world of dreams or Shakespeare by the revelation of an agony greater than our own? In M. Bourget's words, "Each chooses his own opium." To comprehend the poem we must resemble the poet who has transcribed himself therein,—a universal truth to which a Kempis only gave particular expression when he wrote, "Whosoever would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavour to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ." The poet in expressing his sorrow must also express ours, or we shall be in hopeless disunion; and literary fame consists in the myriad assertions of similarity which readers pour forth in praise, just as the popularity of a religion depends upon the similarity between the ideals it presents and those of the age to which it is presented.

And so the poet's fame depends upon the success with which he images the general in the particular,—on the reality, the vividness of his

types. The Homeric heroes, with their bitter tears, still live because they still represent with fidelity a part of human nature that has lasted thirty centuries. Aucassin and Nicolette are still fresh and intense with the passion of spring-tide love. Shakespeare and Otway still people Venice. Amalfi recalls its ancient glories in Webster's pages. Of Giovanni and Anabella might be said in Keats's words, "For ever wilt thou love and she be fair."

For there is a two-fold way of reading poetry. We may read it as a thing of life, or as at once the cause and effect of moral forces whose operation we would trace. The ordinary reader reads for pleasure. He is in sympathy with his poet, or he casts the book aside as insipid, lifeless. He seeks the ultimate expression of his personal emotions. He finds it in so far as his mind resembles that of the author. Instinctively he ranks the poets in the order in which they affect him. And so it nearly always comes to pass that there is some contemporary idol whose poetry is preferred to that of past ages, but whom the revolution of thought will inevitably displace; and at the same time there is an undercurrent of opinion, representing the more deeply learned, the more highly cultured, who prefer the older poets because of their culture, because culture is the offspring, not of the new, but of the old, because their converse with the past is fraught with psychical results which tend to render them more facile of sympathy with the past than with the present. And it would almost seem that the veneration in which the Latin and Greek literatures have been and still are held must be due to the persistency with which they have been studied, as well as to their marvellous power of expressing the emotion, of presenting the type. Speaking gener-

ally literature is no study for the lower classes, the uncultured. They are under too urgent stress of finding the necessities of life; and the bodily wants must not be in too great evidence if the mental wants are to emerge into consciousness. Literature appeals to the wealthy, to those at least who should be cultured; who, having their bodily wants supplied, have leisure to feel and to attend to the needs of the soul. And these have studied in their youth, ever since the Renaissance, the classical literatures to the exclusion of all others. Thus it comes to pass, that for the last five centuries men who have found the need of the assistance of poetry, the men for whom a poetic literature exists, turned first to those of which they possessed any knowledge. The national poetry of Europe sprang up at first to supplement rather than to supplant the poetry of Greece and Rome. And over these a strife has been waged so fierce and purposeless as to recall the warfare of the rival schoolmen in the middle ages, or of rival politicians in our own. A varying arrangement in accordance with a personal standard is all that has resulted from the personal criticism of the past.

The teleological system, against which scientific writers have striven during the last half century in the field of ontology, had also profoundly influenced such critical thought as existed. Critics were always seeking the object which the poet ought to have had in writing—to delight or to reform the world—when often enough his only conscious object was to earn his daily bread, his only real compulsion the necessities of his nature, for, in the past at all events, men without some literary aptitude have not made their living by literature, nor have poets as a rule supported themselves by manual labour. Such

teleological judgements, which neglect the fundamental truth that all action on the part of man results from the inter-action of temperament and environment, have produced very much confused thought in the moral world. Critics have evolved the startling theory that because Greek poets imitated life after one manner, it was impossible to imitate life successfully in any other—for this is the essence of the teaching of the schools of Classicism both in France and England—as if a fourth-hand copy were likely to be a successful portrait, as if, when Greek conceptions had filtered through the Roman mind into the French, and then into the English, they were likely to have retained any originality or truth! The result in England was Cato and Sophonisba.

With a puny infant's force  
They swayed about upon a rocking-horse,  
And thought it Pegasus.

Any attempt to regulate the products of the human mind by laws other than its own, which are its own because they are its nature, produces brilliant works, polished by all that "infinite capacity for taking pains" in which the eighteenth century recognised the essence of genius—but works too in which the form was everything, the thought nothing, although they were addressed to the intellect, and say nothing to the heart which might not almost as well have been written in prose; thus they are noticeably deficient in that pronounced *emotion-tone*, which is as essential to poetry as sensibility to a poet; they are addressed to the Mirabels and Millamants of their stage, not to men and women. It was criticism of life based on the works of Aristotle and Horace, of Vida and Boileau, of Roscommon

and Pope. Despite the accumulated experience of man, despite the many variant types of poetry which had arisen between the ages of Aristotle and of Pope, no progress had been made, no wider generalisations had been formed. It was a sterile method, imposed by fashion and accepted by insensibility.

The success of this criticism would have reduced literature to a formulated science. There would have been evolved a number of formulæ for each several species of emotion, and within these formulæ the literary man would have been strictly confined. There is the same difference between such work and poetry as between a photograph and a portrait by Michael Angelo. Unfortunately one cannot catch souls by machinery. The ill-success of this method seems analogous to the similar ill-success of the gnosticism—"science falsely so called"—of ethics. Morals are indeed the essential basis of society, but there is no science of the unit, of the individual as such. The general truth is always individually modified, and so there is no science of individual action. So long as citizens are moral, society will hold together, and no amount of reasoning over the matter will change the nature of man from good to evil or from evil to good.

Another almost obsolete form of criticism is that of the "class-list"—indeed it is the most natural and perhaps the most useless criticism one can imagine. It is natural, because whenever we read we make a mental note of the amount of pleasure or disgust we experience in the perusal; it is useless, because, however much others may resemble and therefore admire a poet, that fact cannot affect the degree of our resemblance. People might talk Hallam or Macaulay, but unless they resembled them they could not feel

with them, could not sincerely endorse their literary judgements. This criticism, in especial that of Johnson, of Jeffrey, and of Macaulay, was that of men who, in Lowell's words, mistook their personal likes and dislikes, tastes and distastes, for general principles; who, believing in the permanent advance of man, forgot that they in their turn would be left behind; men who saw in their own generation the *ne plus ultra* of the human race. Happy they in such a pleasing illusion!

Is the function of criticism then to discover and reveal beauties which are, or may be hidden to the ordinary eye? But it is at least arguable that, unless the ordinary eye be acute enough to perceive for itself, it will scarcely appreciate them when revealed. It is said that the artist reveals on his canvas beauties which the vulgar ignore. But is not the man of sensitive soul, with a keen taste for beauty, that ever unfulfilled promise, equally able to discern the beauties of the painting and of the landscape of which it is a transcript? And do the vulgar who stand and gape before the picture realise the revelation? Is this method successful? Is a man any the nearer comprehension because he can talk glibly in the terms of art? Though he talk Ruskin, can he feel Ruskin if it be not his nature to? If then he be naturally out of sympathy with Ruskin, Ruskin can do him no good. Such criticism does not appeal to the vulgar. And another objection is still to be met. Is the method critical? Is it not rather creative? Ruskin in those gorgeous periods of his describes his soul-states rather than pictures; he mingles his own personality with that of the painter, and educes a new beauty for him to taste who lists, as Lamb did with the Elizabethan dramatists, and Arnold



with the select brotherhood of "sweetness and light." It seems in essence creative, scarcely critical.

And Matthew Arnold falls into the very sin at which he aimed such irony. Is he "disinterested" when the aim of all his criticism was the elimination of the Philistine? Surely this is a very "practical" object to pursue, and hardly may be called a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, unless the words be used in some hidden, esoteric sense, and then they should scarcely have been published to the world. And what does he say is the object of criticism? "To learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world"—another practical "interested" aim, only to be reached by polemics, in which too Arnold falls into the teleological quicksand. The best! Ay, but what is the best? What if of three men of apparently equal culture each one prefers either *Æschylus*, or *Sophocles*, or *Euripides*, to the others? Who shall say which of them is right? Who shall say whether Lamb was right or wrong in preferring *EDWARD THE SECOND* to *RICHARD THE SECOND*? And if there be no absolute standard, but only our own preference, by which we may decide what is best, how is it to be learnt or propagated? Though Matthew Arnold was well qualified for criticism by a wide capacity for sympathy, though he was one of the earliest Englishmen to see that the coming age was to be one of criticism, though he vindicated criticism from the strictures of Wordsworth and his like, yet he based his system upon the unhappily false postulate, that man may know what is the best with certainty. If only it were true, how different would have been the story of human life! We, and I think succeeding generations, have cause to be profoundly grateful to Matthew Arnold, but, as I have said, his work

is rather creative than critical, and his theory unfortunately mistaken. For man cannot know the relation of subjective to objective truth, nor ever "see the object as it really is."

But if my analysis of the poetic spirit as manifested in poetry be just, the functions of criticism must be other than these. If it be a science, it must increase our stock of knowledge, of scientific truth, which is as demonstrable as mathematic truth, by no means depending on that variable factor, taste. Indeed the only aim which poetic (or for that matter, any other) criticism can seriously propose to itself, is, not to record the intensity of emotion which the poet awakes in the writer and thus to furnish the materials for another chapter in psychological history, but to write that chapter in the history of the human soul, to trace that portion of the development of *Psyche* in man, which has been laid bare in the throbbing melodies of verse. As we have seen, to the ordinary reader the perusal of living poetry, of verse that expresses his emotional necessities, is a psychical event which leaves him other than he was before. His experience is widened. His conceptions of the possibilities of life are enlarged. The boy, for instance, on the threshold of life who sits on some moss-clad stone, perhaps the base of a sun-dial vanished long since, in an old-fashioned garden, musing over the tale of *Tristram and Yseult* as Mr. Swinburne tells it, while the whispering air now turns the neglected leaves of his book, now carries to his unheeding ear the light voices of the companions he has deserted—is he not living, adding to the store of his emotional experiences more truly than if he were mingling with their sports? But this is not the reading of the critic. He too may pause to think, but with him it is the thought

of analysis; he is disentangling the many threads that are interwoven in the poet's consciousness as manifested in his utterance; he is connecting them with those great tendencies of thought which marked the poet's age. The reader's attention is concentrated on his own emotion, but the critic's on that of his poet.

And to write this history a two-fold power is above all requisite—a power of sympathy and analysis. A man is born a critic as he is born an orator or a poet. Perhaps the most wonderful example of this is Charles Lamb and his treatment of the Elizabethans, whose verse he as strangely recalls in his own JOHN WYDVIL, as in the cadence of his prose he reminds one of the RELIGIO MEDICI. Although Coleridge dimly perceived the same truth through his haze of metaphysic, Lamb was the only man of his age to fully comprehend the truth that when the human soul reaches that degree of intensity which we call poetic genius, it may no longer be weighed in the balance against another; it is set in a vacuum; it has touched the note beyond which variations are not perceptible to human ears—it is too different, perhaps it is too similar. Analysis may prove subtle enough to indicate these differences, these similarities; but by what apparatus shall we determine the relative value of two poets? Is he the greatest who has charmed most restless hearts to forgetfulness? But the plebiscite may only be taken on that day which closes once and for all the "dream of human life."

And so Lamb refrains from the perilous method of setting one poet above another; he does not attempt to decide whether Ford or Webster were the greater of the two; but he analyses so subtly, so delicately, that

we know at once that he has read their inmost hearts by the light of his own sympathetic soul. That his method only resulted in turning the attention of men with increased interest to the study of Shakespeare's contemporaries for their own sakes was due, I think, to the limitations of the age, but not to those of his mind. He cast the glamour of his personality over the men of his generation, and became a potent psychical factor in their intellectual lives, revealing to them, or rather suggesting to them through their common kinship, those beauties he himself perceived so clearly.

As Arnold said, the age is a critical one, but for other reasons, I think, than those which he assigned. It is critical, because the scientific spirit is critical. Science has analysed and re-written the history of the material world; it is re-writing the history of the soul of man. It is devoid of belief, that is, of prejudice. It is therefore capable of understanding, of appreciating, of sympathising with, the varied expressions of what has been subjective, emotional truth. It was urged against the character of Henry St. John that his opinions never hardened into convictions. But what was deemed a sin in the eighteenth century would be accounted unto him for righteousness by the thought of to-day. We feel the unity of all life, of all thought, of all emotion. If we refrain from cherishing ideals, saving those personal ones which are the basis of all action, through a realisation of their vanity, we are so much the more in a position to sympathise with the ideals of others. The typical intelligence of the age is that of Amiel, in whom Matthew Arnold found so excellent a critic. We possess within us the germ of every emotional state, and so when we are dealing with emo-

tional truth our sympathy is catholic. And sympathy which arises from resemblance means comprehension. In Stendhal's words, "*Les éloges sont des certificats de ressemblance.*" But this is not enough. Sympathy by itself will only mean that one will read, enjoy, and praise. The power of analysis must be added, the power to resolve a state of consciousness into its component elements. The critic must also be a psychologist and an historian. He must trace the causes, both moral and material, which governed the conception and execution of the work he is considering. He need not give expression to the depth of his own feelings; he need not extol his author, however subtly he may find his mute and hidden thoughts clothed in vivid words; but he must remember that

it is only such a poet whom he can understand, and that in dealing with any other his work must lack sincerity, which is subjective truth. As Joubert said, "*Les hommes ne sont justes qu'envers ceux qu'ils aiment.*"

And let us not forget that the poet often lives with the terrible consciousness that he has fought the fight in vain, that he has served no good purpose, that he has lost the faith, however impassive he may seem; while if the desires of our souls are sated by the things of earth, if our hearts are gross and our ears are dull of hearing, if we cannot comprehend the expression of his grief for the destiny of man, we may be like the children peering through the gaping chinks at the ever-recurrent tragedy of the slaughter-house.

H. HERBERT DODWELL.

## VENUS.

The harbinger of light, whom following  
close,  
Spreads o'er the sea the saffron-robed  
morn.

THE Earth's twin sister throbbing on the fringe of the eastern sky Venus breaks upon our admiring gaze "under the opening eyelids of the morn," where the shadowy phantoms of night are fleeing before the first rays of the coming day. In a brief space she is lost in a flood of golden light swelling over mountain and meadow, and the observer must wait the return of another grey dawn for a glimpse of the peerless planet whose praises have been sung by poets of every land. By-and-by (after a few months) she reappears in the west radiant in calm pure lustre. In lines of unusual beauty Milton apostrophises the planet, thus :

Fairest of stars, last in the train of  
night,  
If better thou belong not to the dawn,  
Sure pledge of day that crown'st the  
smiling morn,  
With thy bright circlet, praise Him in  
thy sphere.

As an evening star Venus is first seen low down in the heavens almost visibly pulsating amid the after-glow of the setting sun. Gradually as the evenings lengthen the lover of nature casting his eyes over the azure vault will notice that Venus is night by night receding farther and farther away from the Sun, and approaching nearer to Jupiter. At the moment of writing this paper these glowing orbs are both in the constellation Virgo, and have attained their

nearest point of approach ; Jupiter is just a little to the north-west of Venus.

Venus, then, becomes an evening star when approaching the part of her orbit nearest the Earth, called the inferior conjunction, and a morning star when moving from our side towards the farther part of her path round the Sun, or towards superior conjunction. For a certain time she is invisible, just as the Moon is invisible for a certain time before and after her conjunction with the Sun, or at the time of new Moon. After the Moon Venus is our nearest neighbour ; her place in the planetary sphere is second in order from the Sun, and in size she is but a little less than our globe. Though so beautiful Venus is not capricious ; she keeps her course with less eccentricity than any other of the planets, at a distance from the Sun of about  $67\frac{1}{2}$  million miles, and from the Earth of about 26 million miles. Being so much nearer the Sun than we are her calendar year is comprised within the briefer period of 224 days, 16 hours and 49 minutes, or in rather less than seven and a half terrestrial months. So, if Venus be inhabited by living sentient beings resembling life on Earth, their span of life may be briefer than ours. A hundred years with us would with them reckon as a hundred and sixty-two. In some of her leading characteristics, as in size, density and atmosphere, Venus resembles the Earth more closely than any other member of the Sun's family, not excepting Mars, our next neighbour on the outer side of the Earth's orbit.

And, as may well be supposed of a heavenly body so lustrous, Venus has a history reaching far back to the dim mysterious times of Assyrian mythology, when the Chaldean priest and astrologer beheld in the radiant star of the morning the image of a chaste deity, the goddess Ishtar, mistress of life. She ranks third in the great triad of the heavens, namely, the Sun, Moon, and Venus. When Venus was once set there was nothing left in the sky sufficiently brilliant to replace her worthily, and the priests were compelled to introduce another deity, Ramman, the lord of the atmosphere and of thunder, in order to fill the void her disappearance occasioned. Of all the "wandering stars" Venus was looked upon as supreme, and admiration of her loveliness found expression in such epithets as the Incomparable, the Flower of the Sky, or the Bright One. Strangely, however, they associated the evening star with the impure Beltis, the Mylitta of Herod. Associated, yet contrasted, these attributes of the planet correspond respectively with Ashtoreth, the pure, and Asher, the impure. A further glimpse into these old-world views respecting Venus may be gained in Mr. Thompson's rare work on the *REPORTS OF THE MAGICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON*, preserved in the Oriental room of the British Museum. The varying positions and aspects of the planet were regarded by them as signs of the varying moods of the goddess in relation to human affairs. Thus, when Venus fixes her position the days of the prince will be long; there will be justice in the land. When Venus appears in Siwan there will be slaughter of the enemy; and when she appears in the tropic of Cancer the King of Akkad will have no rival. ". . . Five or six days ago she reached Allul: This is its inter-

pretation: When Venus approaches Allul there will be obedience and welfare in the land; the gods will have mercy on the land; the crops of the land will prosper. The sick in the land will recover. Pregnant women will perfect their offspring. The great gods will show favour to the sanctuaries of the land, the houses of the great gods will be renewed. . . . When Venus puts on the diadem of the Moon divided there will be desolation."

These early conceptions of the divine attributes of the fair star spread over Western Asia to Egypt, and onward to Greece and Rome. To the old Greeks the resplendent orb of morn was Phosphor, the torch-bearer to Aurora, heralding the dawn; while the star of the evening, Hesperus, held sway over the western realms of Earth and sky. In the *ILIAD* (book xv. 395) Venus is referred to in the following lines:

As radiant Hesper shines with keener  
light  
Far-beaming o'er the silvery host of  
night.

The identity of the morning and evening appearances was not recognised in the Western world until Pythagoras had returned from Egypt laden with Eastern lore. The Chaldean astronomers had taught that both Venus and Mercury moved in circling paths about the Sun, and necessarily appeared sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening, according to their position relatively to the Sun.

Leaving behind the glamour of myth and marvel which for ages clung to the "Shepherd's Star" (the "Star of Bethlehem," as some fondly believe) we come to the dawn of modern astronomy, and find Galileo Galilei, at Florence, intent upon the construction of an optical instrument

which shall enable him to explore the heavens with a penetrating eye far exceeding the feeble power of natural vision. He had heard of Jansen's invention of a tube which caused distant objects viewed through it to appear as distinctly as when brought near to the eye, and recognising the assistance such an instrument would afford him in his astronomical research, he adopted Jansen's method and succeeded in making a telescope by the aid of which the power of the eye was increased thirty-fold. None but a beginner in the observation of celestial objects can realise the interest with which Galileo for the first time in human experience pointed his new instrument towards the heavens, and took a sweeping survey of the glories revealed to his astonished eyes. Parts of the firmament which to the naked eye were a perfect blank were now aglow with far-off worlds hitherto undreamt of by man.

Armed with his powerful lens Galileo entered upon a career of observation and inductive reasoning which mark the first stage of an epoch in the history of astronomy, when it rose from dim, indefinite speculation to the front rank of the exact sciences. It was impossible to break away from old-world conceptions of the heavens without disturbing deeply-seated prejudices resting upon the sanction of antiquity. To overcome these was an arduous task. Strengthened however by the *De Revolutionibus* of Copernicus, Galileo steadfastly persevered, and from his labours there gradually broke upon the world a new light which revealed the true structure of the heavens. In this brief narrative however we may touch but lightly on some of the points of the controversy which arose between the adherents of the old and the pioneers of the new astronomy.

Soon after his discovery in September, 1610, of Jupiter's moons, which had done so much to unsettle the old belief in the Earth being the central body of the universe, around which the Sun, Moon and stars revolved, Galileo directed his telescope towards Venus. He found it to be not exactly round but somewhat convex in form, or like the Moon when nine days old. The true significance of the phase was not lost upon Galileo, but he evidently thought it needful to exercise caution in communicating to others this fresh discovery. Adopting a method not uncommon in those days he put his announcement in the form of an anagram, thus: *Haec immatura a me jam frustra leguntur, o.y.*, which may be read, "These incomplete observations are as yet read by me in vain." Father Costelli disliking the testimony that Galileo's discoveries were bringing to the truth of the Copernican theory had asked very pertinently why, if Mercury and Venus were interior planets revolving about the Sun, they did not show phases like the Moon's. Galileo was ill, and put him off for a time. This was on the 5th of November, 1610. By the 15th of the following month, however, he was prepared with a complete answer; his gladdened eyes had meanwhile been greeted with a full view of the lovely planet in her half full stage. From this point onwards she had passed through all the varying phases with which the Moon has rendered us familiar in her calm, majestic sway over the evening sky. It was now certain that only the side of the planet turned towards the Sun was illuminated: that it shone only by light received from the Sun, and not by its own glory, as hitherto had been believed. This was disquieting news for the astrologer. For, if the



story told of Venus were true of all the planets, away would fly the cherished illusion of ages that each orb poured its own special influence upon the denizens of this lower world, and with it would go the renown which by right was his as a foreteller of events. Nor was the apprehension lessened when in 1611 Galileo published his *NUNCIUS SIDEREUS*. Yet it would almost seem as if the preacher who lifted up his voice against Galileo Galilei was something of a humorist with a turn for punning; he chose for the text of his discourse, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?"

Boldly entering the disputants' arena at Padua or at Pisa, Galileo would lash with the scorn of his tongue the professors of science and philosophy who, never daring to investigate for themselves, held tenaciously to the doctrines of the schools; who, if they were able to recite from the *NATURAL PHILOSOPHY* of Aristotle, or quote from the *ALMAGEST* of Ptolemy, were content to believe they had reached the limit of human knowledge. "Your eminence would be delighted," writes a contemporary, "if you heard him [Galileo] holding forth in the midst of fifteen or twenty all violently attacking him, sometimes in one house, sometimes in another. But he is armed after such a fashion that he laughs all of them to scorn; and even if the novelty of his opinions prevent entire persuasion, at least he convicts of emptiness most of the arguments with which his adversaries endeavour to overwhelm him."

Galileo, however, saw danger ahead, and prudence suggested that he should move warily. We find him next addressing a letter to William de Medici, at Prague, in which he gives an account of his discoveries, and he asks that it may be forwarded to his friend Kepler. It is printed in the

preface of Kepler's work on Optics. After speaking of the world of wonders his telescope had revealed to him, Galileo adds,

We have hence the most certain, sensible decision and demonstration of two grand questions, which to this day have been doubtful, and disputed among the greatest masters of reason in the world. One is that the planets in their own nature are opaque bodies, attributing to Mercury what we have seen in Venus, which necessarily moves round the sun, as also Mercury and the other planets—a thing well believed indeed by Pythagoras, Copernicus, Kepler, and myself, but never yet proved as now by ocular inspection upon Venus.

He concludes with an explanation of the cypher already mentioned, showing that by transposing the letters of the sentence it may be read as follows: *Cynthia figuras emulatur Mater Amorum*:—i.e., "Venus shows phases like the Moon's."

Conscious of the power his opponents possessed over him and their determination to use it, Galileo sought to propitiate the favour of the Church, and in 1616 he was so fortunate as to be granted an audience of Paul the Fifth, who received him with cordiality. At the close of the interview his Holiness assured Galileo that the Congregation were in no humour to listen lightly to calumnies against him, and that so long as he himself held the papal chair Galileo might consider himself safe from harm. It was tacitly understood between them that these assurances were given on the understanding that Galileo should cease from advocating the opinions of Copernicus respecting the movements of the heavenly bodies.

It is difficult to reconcile Galileo's devious courses with honest conviction. He is perpetually trying to blind those who oppose him on ecclesiastical ground by subtle artifice in the way he presents his argument,

both orally and in print. In 1624 we meet with him again hurrying to Rome in order to congratulate Urban the Eighth on his elevation to the Papal throne, and to assure his Holiness of his devotion to the Church. The Pope was so agreeably surprised with Galileo and his profession of faith that he at once wrote a letter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany commending the distinguished Florentine to his good graces. In this letter, still extant, the Pope says: "We find in him not only literary distinction but love of piety, and he is strong in those qualities by which Pontifical good-will is easily obtained . . . We lovingly embrace him, nor can we suffer him to return to the country whither your liberality recalls him without an ample provision of Pontifical love. . . . Every benefit which you shall confer upon him will conduce to our gratification."

A curious commentary on Galileo's attitude towards ecclesiastical authority is found in a letter which he wrote soon after leaving Rome to the Archduke Leopold. It accompanied a treatise which Galileo had prepared on the *THEORY OF THE TIDES*. A vein of sarcasm runs through the letter, thinly disguised with what may be sincere loyalty and submission to the will of the Church, but certainly betraying keen sensibility to the perils of plain speech. He tells the Duke that the idea of writing the work occurred to him when in Rome listening to the theologians debating on the prohibition that had been put upon Copernicus's *DE REVOLUTIONIBUS*, on account of the opinions which it contained respecting the earth's motion, and in which Galileo says he at that time believed—"until it pleased those gentlemen to suspend the book, declaring it to be false

and repugnant to the Holy Scriptures." He adds,

Now, as I know how well it becomes me to obey and believe the decisions of my superiors, which proceed out of more profound knowledge than the weakness of my intellect can attain to, this theory which I send you, and which is founded on the motion of the earth, I now look upon as a fiction and a dream, and beg your Highness to receive it as such. But as poets often learn to prize the creations of their fancy, so, in like manner, do I set some value on this absurdity of mine. It is true that when I sketched this little work I did hope that Copernicus would not, after eighty years, be convicted of error; and I had intended to develope and amplify it further, but a voice from Heaven suddenly awakened me, and at once annihilated all my confused and entangled fancies.

At a later date Galileo succeeded in obtaining ecclesiastical permission to publish his great work on the *TWO PRINCIPAL SYSTEMS OF THE WORLD: THE PTOLEMAIC AND THE COPERNICAN*. No sooner, however, had it appeared in print than he was called upon to renounce the opinions of Copernicus, to which it was considered he had given too much prominence and favour. Bold and skilful as he was, Galileo never lost sight of the risk he ran by frank avowal of his new theory, to escape which he clothed the subject (presented in the form of a dialogue) in a subtle disguise, apparently thinking the intelligent reader would discern the real aim and value of the arguments employed on either side. Galileo cannot be acquitted of using every form of artifice in order to screen himself from responsibility. He would have presented a nobler figure to posterity had he possessed the unflinching courage of the early martyrs.

At the age of seventy, infirm of body and blind, Galileo passes out of public view, cheered it may well be by the comforting thought that he

had shaken to their foundations the astronomical fallacies of the old school, and that no earthly power could arrest the progress, or stay the development of the new astronomy, whose authority rests upon demonstrable facts.

It was but little the painstaking Schröter could make out, between the years 1788 and 1793, respecting the surface of the planet. The first feature that attracted his attention was a sharp prominence on the southern horn of the crescent, which was always seen to be longer and more pointed than the northern one. After careful examination he came to the conclusion that the southern projection was really a high mountain ridge which, arresting the sun's rays, caused a dark shadow to fall on the inner side. But surely Schröter was far out in his reckoning when he estimated the height of the peak to be about twenty-seven miles, that is to say, an altitude five times higher than the loftiest eminence on the earth's surface. There seems to be little doubt of the existence of a dark streak on the southern horn suggestive of a high peak. Astronomers situated at widely different places have often seen it, notably Mr. Breen, at Cambridge, using the great Northumberland telescope. Schröter, continuing his observation of the dark eminence, noticed that it appeared and disappeared at regular intervals, and from the time which elapsed between these occurrences he inferred that the planet revolved on its axis once in every twenty-three hours, twenty-one minutes.

Sir William Herschell, however, arrived at a different conclusion. On his first examination of the planet he fancied, or indeed more than fancied, that he saw hazy traces of prominences and depressions, here brighter, there duller parts, as of

lofty peaks rising high above a cloud-laden atmosphere. But on more careful inspection he found that these appearances varied so much from time to time, and disappeared so rapidly that they really afforded no evidence of a diurnal revolution. Assuming the planet to be surrounded by an atmosphere he concluded that what he had seen was more probably due to clouds and other varying phenomena. Schröter, however, led the way to a definite conclusion on the subject of an atmosphere. He pointed out, in the first place, the observed rapid diminution of the planet's brilliancy towards the terminator (the hollow edge of the crescent), which he thought could only be attributed to atmospheric absorption; next, to the horns of the crescent projecting beyond the limit of a semi-circle, and lastly, to the presence of a bluish gleam illuminating the early hours of the planet's night. What else could this illumination indicate but the waning rays of the sun gradually melting away in an atmosphere laden with moisture? Herschell was constrained to admit that the same effect is produced by refraction in our own atmosphere when the heavenly bodies are visibly above the horizon at a moment when they are really just below it. On this point Schröter's reasoning received half a century later ample confirmation from observers in Europe and America. Herr Mäder, of Dorpat, in May, 1849, found the arms of the waning light mentioned to embrace no less than  $240^\circ$  of the entire extent of the planet's disc. Mr. Guthrie, of Bervie in Scotland, had seven years earlier observed under favourable conditions the whole circumference lit up with a faint nebulous glow, an appearance which could only result, it was assumed, from the solar rays piercing the planet's atmosphere. Similar phe-

nomena were noticed in September, 1863, by Mr. Leeson Prince, at Uckfield; and in December, 1866, by Professor Lyman, of Yale College. During five hours before the transit of Venus across the sun's face took place in 1874 Mr. Lyman noticed with special interest that a yellowish ring of refracted light showed at one point an approach to interruption, as light would do shining through a dense atmosphere. It is noteworthy that the dark hemisphere of the planet was occasionally seen slightly illuminated, Venus presenting the appearance seen on the Moon, when we say, "The old moon is in the new moon's arms." This faint glow on the Moon which comes of the Earth's reflected light falling on her dark side may be seen on any clear evening three or four days after her change. But in the case of Venus there is no large body near her to shed such light as this upon the side turned away from the Sun.

It must be admitted that the sum of these observations is not so complete or satisfying as could have been wished. For, after all, men's most ardent desire is to know whether our brilliant neighbour is really a world like our own. Some astronomers, it is true, have charmed the imagination with a prospect of finding in the glowing planet a world peopled with intelligent beings akin to ourselves, playing their part in the Cytherean drama among hills and valleys clothed in perennial verdure, and laved by sylvan streams. Early in the last century Herr Gruithuisen, of the Munich Observatory, threw out the suggestion that the opalescent gleam occasionally seen on Venus might be the effect of a grand illumination got up by the inhabitants of the planet in celebration of some periodically recurring event; while Zollner saw in the peculiar light the phosphor-

escent glow of an immense ocean teeming, it might be, with warm life.

Certainly the presence of an atmosphere surcharged with dense cloud opens to the mind's eye a view of large expanses of ocean, seas and rivers; of mountain ranges whose cooler surface condenses the sun-drawn vapours into clouds. Hence may follow all the phenomena with which terrestrial experience has made us familiar, and which conduce to the existence of vegetable and animal life. And there are reasons for thinking that Venus is in about the same stage of her existence as the Earth is. But this pleasing conception is not heightened when we remember that Venus has no attendant moon to lend charm to her evening skies, and that she is placed so much nearer than our globe is to the source of all light and heat. The Sun as seen in her skies has a diameter one-third larger than that which he presents to us. Hence it is inferred that Venus has a temperature, particularly in her equatorial regions, which would be unbearable to us. But possibly her atmosphere (about double the Earth's in density) may temper the heat of the Sun, and give the planet a mean surface temperature not much unlike our own. Then there are the temperate and subarctic zones, where the climate and environment may be well suited to the existence of the various forms of life as we are able to imagine them. Assuming then that the planet has large expanses of ocean (and we are fairly entitled to do so from the fact that its surface is shrouded in an almost impenetrable atmosphere which reflects the Sun's rays as from the surface of driven snow), the question arises, how in the absence of a moon are the tides regulated? The Moon as we know is the chief factor in the production of tidal waves on our

globe, her proportion of the work being about two and a half times greater than the Sun's. From their combined action we have tidal waves ranging from the highest spring tides when the Sun and Moon are pulling together, to the lowest neap tides, when the Sun is in opposition, these latter being only one and a half times as high as would be tides produced by the Sun alone. And taking into account how much nearer Venus is to the Sun than we are it becomes clear that she has no need of a satellite to raise tides on her great surface waters, for the Sun's more powerful action will raise an upheaval and flow about equal in amount to the Earth's mean tides, and without the extreme variations which mark the tides on our globe.

Some astronomers of repute, as Gruithuisen and Trouvelot, Webb and Phillips, perhaps unconsciously influenced by a desire to bring Venus into harmony with terrestrial conditions, have seen whitish points glittering like "ice needles" at the poles of the planet. M. Trouvelot is very precise. When Venus was approaching inferior conjunction in February, 1878, he observed the polar spots distinctly. The one on the southern pole or horn sparkled more brilliantly than that on the northern pole. The surface of each was irregular—a confused mass, indeed, of luminous points; in general outline they resembled a mountainous district studded with numerous peaks (like the Earth's polar regions) reflecting the Sun's rays with surprising brilliancy. He remarks: "The polar spots seem bristling with peaks and needles. This is especially the case in regard to the southern spots, which seem entirely formed of brilliant points. On the north polar spot is a luminous peak which seems to project outside the limb." Though there may be

no *prima facie* reason against the supposition of polar regions of the character mentioned, it seems very doubtful if mountains of ice can have been seen on a planet whose surface is shrouded in a vaporous covering so dense as is the atmosphere of Venus, which rises to a height of about one hundred and twenty-six kilometres. Miss Ellen M. Clerke in her admirable monograph on *THE PLANET VENUS* (1893) suggests that "they may be not solid rock structures, but cloud masses piled up to an abnormal height, perhaps at the meeting point of cold and warm air currents."

In recent years astronomers have found that Venus can be observed in the daytime with far better results than can be got from evening observation. In the middle of the day the planet can be found with an equatorial stand mounting a moderate-sized telescope—a silver reflector answers better than an achromatic. And high up in the heavens she is free from the vapours of the horizon which lend her the limpid glow so dazzling to the eyes. She is most favourably situated for observation when near her elongations; she then appears like a half moon, or slightly horned. At the time when she is nearest the Earth—25,000,000 miles away (i.e., 10,000,000 miles nearer to us than Mars is at his least distance), she is invisible, being lost in the Sun's rays. Consequently, only a portion of her apparent surface can be seen at any one time. When she is near her elongations, however, she affords a good opportunity for getting solar parallax (the sun's distance), one of the most important units in astronomy. But this is work which belongs more particularly to transit observation.

Transits of Venus over the Sun's disc occur at such rare and distant



intervals, and the work to be done is so important, that as the time approaches there is a general call to arms throughout the ranks of astronomers in every civilised country. It happens that the orbits of the Earth and Venus do not lie exactly in the same plane (that in which our neighbour revolves is inclined  $3^{\circ} 23'$  to that in which the Earth moves); if they did Venus would be seen slowly gliding across the Sun's face once in every five hundred and eighty-four days. Owing to this difference in the level of the two paths Venus passes above or below the direct line of vision looking towards the Sun, except at the time when she comes very near the lines of intersection of the two tracks. When this happens she presents the appearance of a dark, well-defined, round ball on the Sun's disc, which, as Mr. Proctor remarks in *OLD AND NEW ASTRONOMY*, serves as an index-plate, the duration of the transit varying from about four to eight hours, the length of time depending upon the line of passage, whether central or across a smaller section of the Sun's disc. The transits usually happen in pairs separated by eight years. Long intervals, however, of  $105\frac{1}{2}$  and  $121\frac{1}{2}$  years elapse between one pair of transits and another, and they occur alternately in June and December. A transit of Venus took place in December, 1631, and its companion (the first transit ever calculated by an Englishman, Rev. J. Horrocks, Hoole, Lancashire) occurred on the 4th of December, 1639, the very day the computist had foretold. Then after the lapse of  $121\frac{1}{2}$  years came a June couple in the years 1761 and 1769, followed  $105\frac{1}{2}$  years later by the two transits of December, 1874 and 1882. These last events aroused a high degree of enthusiasm in the astronomical world; a system for their observation was organised

which embraced in a complete zone the whole hemisphere illuminated by the Sun. For the transit of 1874 expeditions of highly trained observers were equipped and sent out, at a cost of a quarter of a million, to eighty different parts of the globe including some of the most inaccessible regions.

England despatched parties of observers to Egypt, Syria, Persia, India, China, Japan, Australia and the Cape. The labours of this grand army of observers when classified, compared and analysed did not yield results so satisfactory as had been expected. The great illumination of the planet's atmosphere had prevented the observers from getting the exact moment of the contact between the solid body of the planet and the Sun. To this cause were due discrepancies of as much as twenty or thirty seconds between the figures of different observers at the same station. The conclusion deducible from the whole series of observations left the problem of solar parallax undetermined within a probable error of about a million and a half of miles. Parenthetically it may be mentioned that three years later Mr. (now Sir David) Gill, Director of the Royal Observatory at the Cape, made a more satisfactory attack on the problem through the agency of beardless Mars. His heliometric observation, known as the diurnal method of parallaxes, gave him a solar parallax of  $878''$ , corresponding to a solar distance of 93,080,000 miles. This is now the accepted footrule by which the mathematician gauges the expanse separating our Sun from other like orbs, though the distance be so vast that their light-rays may take hundreds, nay, thousands of years to reach us. Still unsatisfied, the chemist, armed with the light-breaking spectroscope, seizes upon these rays of light and analysing them tells



us of what stuff they are made. But surely the greatest wonder of all is that these and other similar triumphs over matter and space should be achieved by beings such as we are, who, relatively to the size of the planet on which we dwell, are but as microscopic objects on the leaf of a tree.

All that can be safely affirmed respecting the physical condition of Venus is that she is surrounded by a vaporous atmosphere which presses upon her surface with nearly double the weight of ours, or in the ratio of 189 to 100. And as to her features discernible through this thick veil we can only infer that the apparent indentations and prominences visible on the crescent, particularly the cusps, may indicate a more uneven surface than the Earth's. In size, however, she comes closely up to the Earth; her diameter, according to measurements made at the Lick and Yerkes Observatories early in 1902, is 7,713 miles, the Earth's equatorial diameter being 7,926 miles. The volume of the Earth exceeds that of Venus about as 100 exceeds 92. And, as seems but fitting, the beautiful star is not so dense as is the Earth, her mass being in the ratio of rather less than 78 to 100.

But it is to be feared there is a rude awakening in store for those who indulge in dreams of a Cytherean world alternately bathed in a flood of golden sunlight, and steeped in the cool, dark shades of night. In 1890 the distinguished astronomer of Milan, Signor G. V. Schiaparelli, after a long series of daytime observations, watching the planet for eight hours consecutively, found himself driven to the conclusion that Venus always

presents the same face to the Sun, just as Mercury does, and as the Moon does to the Earth. If this should be so indeed, and there seems little room for doubt, it follows that Venus has no diurnal rotation on her axis; that she can have but one everlasting day on the side turned towards the Sun, and on the opposite hemisphere but one never-ending night. The error of previous observers in assigning to the planet a diurnal rotation was due, it is believed, to variations in the atmospheric condition of the Earth, which recur, Schiaparelli had remarked, about the same hour daily. Confirmatory evidence of the planet's fixity of position relatively to the Sun was soon afforded by M. Perrotin, at Nice, who during six months' almost continuous observation in 1890 could find no sign of a daily revolution about its axis. He is of opinion that the few varying features visible now and then are due to cloud movements in the upper strata of the planet's atmosphere. The real body of Venus has never been seen; all that has been taken to indicate the presence of lofty mountains, wide chasms and crater-like peaks is now believed to be the fleeting forms of cloud-scenery. But amid the perplexities which beset the observer there is the certainty that between the two separate regions of perpetual night and day there must lie a wide zone of subdued rose-flushed twilight, where the climatic conditions may be well suited to the existence of a race of intelligent beings, whose highest aim may possibly be the exploration of the mysterious regions lying beyond their ken.

ED. VINCENT HEWARD.

## A MIDDLE-AGED MEDITATION.

I REMEMBER, when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, that I went one Sunday morning, after chapel, for a walk with a friendly Don. We stopped for a moment—it was summer—on Clare Bridge, and looked down the Cam. I can still see with the inward eye that incomparable prospect; the Renaissance front of the college, like an Italian palace, the high ironwork of the gate, the grey balustrades of the bridge, the terraced walks above the river, the ivy on the mouldering walls, the shrubs of the garden with the high elms beyond. My companion said, "What a delicious day for my birthday—I am thirty-six to-day."

I was consumed, I remember, in a moment, by a great pity for my friend. I had thought of him vaguely as a few years older than myself—and now a veil was torn away; here was not the lively and vigorous companion that I had imagined, but a man faint with experience, and within a few years of forty, an *old man*, with but a handful of declining years between him and the grave.

I suppose I was myself very young for my age, and somewhat unreflective; for it certainly appeared to me that to describe a man, as I often vaguely did, as "about forty," was practically to relegate him to the class of people for whom life might perhaps hold a few more sober hours, but for whom pleasures of a serious kind could hardly be said to exist. I am now half a dozen years older than my decrepit friend was then, and I find that my point of view has insensibly changed; I do not feel

appreciably older myself than I did on Clare bridge; I have still many illusions; I am still irrepressibly hopeful, and look forward confidently to setting the Thames, or at least the Cam, on fire within the next year or two. The next book that I write is to make me famous; the shower of honorary degrees and decorative ribbons is shortly to begin to fall; and yet I suppose (nay I am sure) that there are many boys to whom I seem as distressingly old as my friend did on that day. Yet every time it is brought home to me—as it is sometimes brought home to me by the confiding talk of some girl whom I take in to dinner, who regards me as long past the power of being interesting, as a *dear old man* in fact—every time, I say, that this is brought home to me, it is with a shock of pain.

I wish here to consider my position briefly, and to state the sources of my happiness and unhappiness. I have always cherished the hope that I shall not fall into the error of those who lament in retrospect over vanished joys and pleasures. It seems to me that it ought to be possible to grow old temperately and joyfully, and to gain at each point the appropriate virtues and ornaments of the decade to which one belongs. I have no wish to anticipate age or to prolong youth unduly. I remember a silly chattering old man in a Swiss hotel, who insisted on taking a large party of helpless persons on a glacier tied together with a rope, while he headed the hapless band himself, waving an ice-axe and recounting the incidents of the days when, as he

said, he *bounded from peak to peak*. Hardly were the words out of his mouth when he fell into a shallow adjacent crevasse, and was extricated by the porter who had accompanied the procession, not indeed to protect it, but to carry humbly the provision for the midday meal. Neither then nor since has that lamentable old man appeared to me in anything but a distressing light, though there were unhappily only too many persons to be found in the hotel to encourage him, and even to admire his parade of vigour. I desire personally to become older in a dignified way, and to know when to stop active pursuits; and when the time comes, and not before, I desire to "beam through my spectacles" upon the young people. I have known men and women who have done this gracefully and successfully, just like the old dog who in his hot youth used to run exulting with the carriage, and who now only turns out to salute it when it departs, to give a hoarse bark or two, and then returns contentedly to the fireside to sleep quietly and to be at his best when the beloved party returns.

I will say frankly that I am far happier in every way than I was as a young man. I suppose I was never a real *young* young man, or I should not be so contented a middle-aged one. I suppose too that I have not yet reached the point at which physical vigour abates, or at which the mind becomes irrevocably made up on every point. I find that I can take exercise, though not violent exercise, as well as ever and with less fatigue. I can walk all day in a mountain country, or bicycle all day in an agreeable landscape. I can shoot better than I used to be able to do; and if exercise has not quite the zest it used to have, I believe I enjoy it more; at the same time I become aware that it is not so necessary to

me as formerly, and that I can keep in health without it; that air in fact is more needful than exercise.

Moreover my interests have largely increased. As a young man I never read the paper, and thought meanly of those who did. Now I read my *TIMES* from end to end and hate to be deprived of it. Then (I had enjoyed a strictly classical education) I knew no history to speak of; I have now a fair general knowledge of the events and personages of modern times. Then I loved poetry and fiction. Now I cannot read modern novels, but tend to revert to half a dozen favourite authors; and poetry I seldom deliberately read. I now prefer biographies and memoirs to almost any other reading. Formerly a biography ceased to interest me as soon as the hero left the university; I now find that up to the age of about forty I can follow his fortunes with absorbing interest. Then my circle was composed of a few friends and relatives, and my interests were confined to the doings of my old school and university and my own countryside. Now a network of innumerable fine chains has grown up over the whole of England, and even extends into foreign parts. I have many correspondents, and the world seems a more real and lively place than it did. All this is pure gain.

One special advantage of middle age I will here gratefully record. I now do, in matters of amusement, only what I know amuses me. As a young man there were many things I felt bound to do, because other people did them, because they were fashionable, because it was natural for a young man to do them, and I did not wish to appear *slow* or exceptional, and for other equally lame reasons. But now I know my own mind. I only go to houses where I know I shall feel at home—

formerly I was incapable of declining an invitation. I now have no difficulty in refusing to do what I do not like, except in cases where some sacrifice must be made for goodfellowship, as, for instance, if a party of bridge cannot be made up without me. If I am asked to ride a friend's horse, I say no. If I am asked to play golf, I say I do not play it; if I am asked if I would like to go over and lunch with some tiresome neighbours, I say frankly that it would not amuse me. This, it seems to me, is not selfishness; I may honestly say that I have a stronger sense of duty and am more conscientious than I was when I was young—but it seems to me that when things are intended purely for pleasure, and have no other motive behind them, it is a pity to do them when they are only burdensome. It is necessary when one is young to do a large number of things for the sake of experiment, because an unenterprising young man can often be prevented from doing something, which turns out eventually to be a source of pleasure, by indolence or some initial shyness. And thus I think that the instinct of trying to do things from a sense of shame is a healthy one in youth. I well remember how I used to frequent balls, though a miserable dancer; and I remember too the moment when I achieved my freedom. I had gone to a ball in a neighbour's house, and stood gloomily about behind doors endeavouring to enter into lively conversation with people who were frankly enjoying themselves. My genial host, espying me as I stood solitary, said to me, "You look as if you were at a funeral." My spirit rose within me, and I said, "Yes, that is how I feel—and, please God, I will never go to another ball as long as I live." And I have kept my word.

Another great benefit conferred by age is the gradual extinction of the sense of shyness. I find that I can now ask a question in a natural way, say frankly, and I hope not discourteously, what I think, meet a stranger on easy terms and without a suspicious feeling that he is likely to despise me. The reason partly is that though my belief in my own attainments has not markedly increased (and indeed there is little reason why it should) my belief in the attainments of other people has not increased either. In youth opinions are apt to be held with a species of defiance, however harmless or inconspicuous they are. But the feeling that I now have, that I have a perfect right to any opinion of my own, probably causes me to modify the language in which I express it, quite apart from the fact that I now see no reason to deny to other people the right, if they are foolish enough to exercise it, of holding opinions diametrically opposite to mine.

Moreover my feeling of the consequences of social solecisms is not so acute. As a young man if I behaved awkwardly, if I expressed an unfavourable opinion, by mischance, of a near relation of someone present in a social gathering, I used to go away feeling an outcast. I now know that awkwardness wins more sympathy than disapproval; and, if I have the misfortune to commit myself to a critical opinion on a near relation of a neighbour and become aware of the fact, I have the courage to invite him to express a similar opinion on some near relation of my own. I no longer feel that the eyes of Europe are on me, and, realising as I do how soon I forget all about the persons I have met, I realise that no one troubles their head very much about me in my absence. Part of this loss of self-consciousness is

physical no doubt, but it is also greatly due to a truer sense of the proportion of things. It is true that one does not become instinctively conscious of one's advancing years. But I have found it useful to remind myself, when I am in the company of people whom I do not hesitate to consider as *buffers*, that after all I am a buffer myself, and have every right to behave as one. All this convergence of experience helps, and the fact remains that a sort of social liberty and equality is one of the best gifts of advancing years, and tends to deliver one from the proneness of youth to indulge in harsh judgements, the converse of which is the painful consciousness of being harshly judged oneself, which results in shyness.

So much for negative benefits ; to turn to the positive advantages gained by advancing years, I am inclined to put among the highest the increasing sense of the beauty of simple things. When I was young I required, to make me conscious of beauty, that there should be some exceptional and sensational quality in what I saw ; I wished to feast my eyes on great mountains, huge precipices, immense buildings, furious seas. Now I am contented with a lane of elms, a sloping pasture, a quiet wood-end, a little stream, a building with a tender grace of antiquity about it. I used to require to be violently impressed and stirred. I liked pictures representing some poignant emotion, music that shrieked and blazed out in a tumult of sound. Now I like small tranquil pictures of landscape, and soft music. Hardly a day passes now without my being surprised by some fine and delicate effect, some glimpse of meek and incommunicable beauty in the things that surround me. A flower on my table, a daffodil with its crumpled head, its smooth sword-like leaf, an airy elm seen from

my window against a blue sky, a mellow wall orange with lichens, a little pool in a pasture set round by rushes—each gives me a thrill of contented delight. I find that I love purity and simplicity of effect more than complexity and magnificence. The result of this is that my life is far fuller of beauty than it was when I was young, and I have exchanged the craving of unsatisfied sensation for a tranquil pleasure in the uninterrupted series of patient delights that nature is for ever preparing in the homeliest landscape. Perhaps I am not so deeply moved and stirred as in the old days ; but the sense of beauty is far more constant and far more sustaining.

This brings me to my last point ; it is that there has grown up in my heart a species of philosophy, I might almost call it religion, which is both stronger and more wholesome than the tumultuous emotions that used to affect me in youth. I used to desire to read the riddle of the world, to have some definite and all-embracing theory which should explain all the mysteries of life and ennoble the dark trials of the soul. I think that I am content to leave more unexplained now, to be more grateful for simple happiness, to take affection soberly and thankfully, to realise that one can but see a little bit of life, and to be thankful for any emotion which enables one to play a quiet and brave part. I fear that this philosophy has not been put to any very severe test, and I do not know what its strength would be if I were confronted with some hopeless and irreparable calamity. But I have seen such visitations fall on others, and I have recognised with deep gratitude that the human heart is capable of bearing with a great deal of equanimity a thought which, it would seem, must darken the whole of life. In

smaller things I believe I am more conscientious, and more aware of the rights of other persons. I have learnt that one has inevitably to pass through hours of depression, and even long and dreary periods when there seems no particularly enlivening or hopeful thought on the horizon. But one somehow emerges, and one is more content to wait.

Of course one cannot profit by the experience of others; and I am well aware that a youthful reader of these lines may think that I am describing a very tame and spiritless existence; all I would say is that I am a happier man than I was when I was young, and that I frankly do not regret the loss of my youth.

A great artist was once describing the decadence which in so many cases

seemed to enfold the middle period of life. "Yes," he said, "old men dream dreams, and young men see visions, but middle-aged men only *dine*." I am aware that there is some truth in this; one gets to find a certain degree of comfort, I will not say indispensable, but at all events a convenient and an agreeable thing. But I entirely deny that my happiness is built upon this or depends upon it; and though I may have lost the faculty of seeing the visions of what may be, and may not yet have lapsed into the region of dreams,—the dreams of what might have been—I can gratefully say that life seems to me more full, more interesting, more poetical, though perhaps less romantic, than in the days when I was young.

POSTUMUS.



## THE NINE PENGUINS' EGGS.

I HAD made up her fire when I retired at ten ; it was midnight now, and to touch it would have brought down the top ash and smothered the whole. A dull red glow rested upon the hearth-rug and reached the valance of her bed ; everything above was in darkness. This was unfortunate, for her candle had burnt to the socket and Miss Barnwell would not release me to fetch my own.

"I'm a-dyin'!" she muttered for the hundredth time.

"*I think not, dear!*" I shouted at intervals, rather mechanically, for we had gone through the performance many times for years past and nothing definite had transpired, as the papers say. Yet I wished I could see her face. She was holding my wrists tightly, but, perhaps not so tightly as usual ; her fingers were certainly cool.

This is the sort of thing that a lady-companion has to put up with. I do not complain : we are paid for it ; but I am not going to simulate an emotion which I did not feel or regret which was not honestly due.

Miss Mary Amelia Barnwell owned to eighty-nine and was believed to be ninety-one. Unlike most old people she took no pride in her age. If she had ever been personable or amiable, or even interesting, she had lost all claim to these qualities before I came to take care of her fifteen years ago. To begin with, she was hard of hearing, and deaf people, as we all know, are less observant than the blind and consequently less cheerful. Some elderly persons are confidential ; she

was secretive. I knew almost as little of her affairs that night as I did when, as I said before, I came to take charge of her ; which is one way of putting it, for she was most independent and far from easy to influence.

Mr. Samuel's precaution was quite uncalled for. Mr. Samuel Barnwell is the eldest great-nephew ; Mr. Albert and Mr. Thomas are the others. All three are well-to-do ; Mr. Samuel, they say, is rich ; he claims to have declined to be knighted the year he was mayor, but that may be only his imagination. He is in business at King's Waterbeach some fifty miles from this, and the other two in Newark and Ely. Their sister, Mrs. Grey, lives the other side of London ; her husband holds a perpetual curacy, and the education of their sons is said to be something of a struggle. She sees but little of her brothers.

Well, as I was saying, Mr. Samuel, when he proposed to engage me for his great-aunt, made it plain in so many words that under no circumstances was I to nourish expectations, and wanted me to sign some paper renouncing in advance any prospective legacy. I am glad to say that I stood upon my dignity and declined to discuss the subject with him, and the thing was settled by Miss Barnwell (to whom I privately referred the question) engaging me over his head.

It was after this that she altered her will, as I always believed. He has never forgiven me. We are distantly polite, which is to say that I am, for Mr. Samuel is one of those

persons who pride themselves on being what they call brusque and other people call rude. Her late Majesty might have made him a knight, but only a miracle could have made him a gentleman.

"I'm a-dyin'!" said the old lady.

The syllables came more slowly; she might only be dropping off. I regretted for the fiftieth time that the hand-bell was out of reach; not that it would have made much difference, the maids sleeping so sound.

"E-li-jah!" This was something fresh. "Yes!" (I had not spoken.) "Certainly—You may come in—"

"'Lijah! dear!" This was in a tone I had never heard her use. I had an absurd sense of intruding, but in a moment her grasp fluttered and relaxed; the change came and I was alone.

I know what is too often done at such times, and I know what should be done; and am glad to say that I did it. I knocked the maids up, lit their candle, and packed them off together for the doctor. By the time they returned every bureau, drawer, cupboard, and cabinet was locked, the plate in safety and many of the smaller ornaments. What they thought and what they said I do not know: how they looked I do know; but I had myself to consider and Mr. Samuel Barnwell to face, and couldn't be so considerate to their feelings as I should have liked to be. I should have looked well hunting the house for missing sheets and dessert-spoons the day after the funeral with the executors at my heels!

But that half-hour was an experience. Going about the empty rooms with only the poor old corpse overhead for company was ghostly work. I had her private keys for the first time and I declare it gave me the creeps to use them; something

seemed at my elbow or peeping over my shoulder all the time.

On the drawing-room what-not lay her knitting; upon the blotting-pad inside the front of the oak bureau was the afternoon's delivery, mostly prospectuses and appeals for charity; one from poor Mrs. Grey (her first and only one in my time), a very touching request for the loan (mind you) of a hundred pounds "for a temporary but pressing family need."

My rule has always been never to interfere, and I had kept to it, but that letter tempted me to put in a word. It did no good; the old lady was flint. "Heigh, indeed! what next? I'm surprised at Isabel," was her comment. I wonder what she thinks of it now. The letter lay half-open, like a mouth beseeching help from the ceiling. The room overhead was *the* room. I locked the front of the bureau, and never turned a key with greater pleasure.

This was the Saturday night, or rather the Sunday morning. The post goes out at half-past seven on Sunday evening. On Monday, just as I was sitting down to my lunch, Mr. Samuel Barnwell marched in and was for taking possession of everything at a moment's notice.

"Why wasn't I told before?" says he severely, without even a good-morning; running his eye over the furniture as if he half expected that something might be missing. "I wrote—," I began, but he cut me short. "Not by the first post, Miss Fanning. If the telegraph office was closed (as to which I'm making inquiries), you could have sent a special messenger, Miss Fanning. You seem to have forgotten that I am the next of kin, Miss Fanning, and heir-at-law. I will trouble you for the keys. I—said—the *keys*!"

His voice grew louder and more imperative as he went on. He

finished taking off his gloves and slapped them into his hat, which he had placed upon the table laid for me. We were both standing. This might have done with a younger woman, but I am not a chicken. I had expected something of this sort, and had completed my dispositions (as the papers were always saying during the war), had looked up the trains, and sent Martha across for Mr. Laidlaw as soon as the cab turned the corner.

Our neighbour, Mr. Laidlaw, is the lawyer who managed things for Miss Barnwell; he lives close by with an invalid sister in a great draughty old family house with the hall lined with cases of stuffed birds. He is thought much of by the county people all round. He had called on the Sunday afternoon and expressed a wish to be in the house when the relatives arrived and I was only too pleased with the suggestion, for the late Miss Barnwell's great-nephews are,—well, peculiar.

Mr. Thomas, the youngest, is sly and selfish, with little piggy eyes. Mr. Albert is quarrelsome and selfish, with a double chin and a coarse red neck that overhangs his collar behind. Mr. Samuel is the finest man of the three, being tall and rather imposing; but he is as sly as Mr. Thomas and as overbearing as Mr. Albert, and as homeward-bound as either. How they come to have a sister like my dear Mrs. Grey is a mystery; she has always taken my fancy, but by some ill luck the poor lady never pleased her great-aunt. Mr. Samuel stood first with her, until he put his foot into it over my coming; after that she changed her way of living, and there was no telling how the money would go.

Well, as I was saying, Mr. Samuel was for riding the high horse, and was behaving himself as no gentleman behaves, when Martha opened

the door of the room and showed in Mr. Laidlaw.

The lawyer is a little clean-shaved precise sort of gentleman, about fifty-five and a bachelor, neatly dressed, very quiet and conciliatory as a rule, though he can put his foot down, too, on occasion. He bowed and shook hands with me first, which was one for Mr. Samuel; then he turned to him quite pleasantly, and said something courteous in the way of condolence. But Mr. Samuel brushed it all aside and came to the point at once. He seemed to think he was in his own house and repeated his demand for the keys, but more reasonably.

The lawyer heard him out with an air of grave concern, standing meanwhile upon the hearth-rug with his back to the fire. Nor did he put himself about to reply; but turned his answer in his mind and put it in the form of a question in a little dry undertone. Did he understand Mr. Barnwell to propound a will? Mr. Samuel stared. Had Mr. Barnwell a will? It appeared not. Had Mr. Barnwell seen the will? No! Did Mr. Barnwell know, as a matter of fact, that he was named executor?

Mr. Samuel cooled and began to realise some of the possibilities of the situation, and the disadvantages of being too previous; but he is all there, is Mr. Samuel, and he popped up again in a moment. Was there a will then? Ah, very gratifying, just what he had always understood; intestate estates are a great nuisance. He had merely looked in as a matter of precaution: some responsible person must be in charge, as Mr. Laidlaw must know; and he had done what the occasion seemed to demand, and so on, feeling his way. But the lawyer's reticence daunted him, so he began again about being the heir-at-law and how pleased he should be

to have Mr. Laidlaw's professional advice, and how a few words in private would doubtless be necessary, Miss Fanning would understand; the will now. Here he gave me a look which was equivalent to an order to leave the room. With my chop and the vegetables getting cold upon the table under his nose I regarded this as insulting, and held my ground; there was an awkward moment.

Then Mr. Laidlaw cleared his throat and began. He apologised for the inconvenience he was causing me and promised, with the most courteous little smile, to be brief; then, turning to Mr. Samuel, he gravely and slowly put him in his right place. I must say he let him down almost too gently. With Mr. Barnwell's permission (that was how he put it), and with Miss Fanning's kind assistance (a bow to me), he would undertake the arrangements for the funeral, at which, no doubt, Mr. Barnwell would wish to be present.

"I should think so indeed," rapped out Mr. Samuel recovering himself.

"Just so," remarked the lawyer; "after which the testamentary dispositions of my late client will be disclosed to—those concerned."

What might this mean? Mr. Samuel hardly knew what to make of it, as I could see. For a couple of breaths he scrutinised the lawyer's impenetrable face but he could make nothing of that either. "Now look here, Laidlaw," he began at length, in the hectoring way which seems natural to some men, "this is all very well, and of course I needn't say I have confidence in you; but I hope there's been no hanky-panky, you know. Miss Fanning here remembers perfectly well the terms on which I engaged her, and my brothers and I are not going—"

Mr. Laidlaw raised a hand so suddenly and looked so sternly that he

stopped. I bridled up, naturally, but before I could open my mouth, the lawyer, who is very ready at times for all his precise delivery, cut in, looking very straight at Mr. Samuel. "The term you have used, Mr. Barnwell, is not a legal term, nor, if you will pardon me, one used between gentlemen. If you mean undue influence, I would have you know that I drew Miss Barnwell's last will; and I think I may so far satisfy your quite natural curiosity as to assure you that your reasonable expectations will not be disappointed."

"But,—but,—"

"But you are not named executor, Mr. Barnwell."

If I had expected a day or two of quiet before the funeral I did not get them. Mr. Laidlaw worked me early and late, but in such a pleasant, appreciative manner that it was impossible to object. He is a perfect gentleman.

"Under the terms of the will, Miss Fanning," he kept saying, "there is a good deal of business which must be transacted upon the day of the funeral, business which I am determined shall go through without a hitch; and the more minute and perfect the arrangements we make now, the easier it will be for you and me on Thursday, Miss Fanning. These books, now,—you did well to keep these cases locked—am I to class them as *divisible curios*, or shall I send them up to Sotheby's?" He was speaking to himself. "Hullo!" he chirped, "THE LAMB'S DEFENCE AGAINST LIES, THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS, THE SANDY FOUNDATION SHAKEN: are any of the family interested in seventeenth century polemics, I wonder! HOLY WAR, first edition, ho! ho!"

"Mr. Thomas Barnwell should know the titles on those books by heart," said I; "he would stand with his nose to the glass, chatting

to Miss Barnwell, by the half-hour together."

"That is so? Then a summary division would be most unfair to the other three who don't know the value of Elzevirs and black-letter tracts. We will catalogue these and sell them for the benefit of the estate, and, trust me, they will fetch a pretty penny. I would give one hundred and fifty pounds for that top shelf as it stands, Miss Fanning."

My respect for Mr. Laidlaw grew daily. I would never have believed that, in matters of housework, a man could be so executive. By Wednesday night there was nothing left to do. The wearing-apparel was spread upon dust-sheets in the second spare bedroom; the plate and the curios, of which the old house was full, were laid upon trestles in the library, as if for a bazaar, in numbered lots corresponding to our catalogue.

"There are some people with whom it is necessary to be very methodical, Miss Fanning; a verified, descriptive inventory with the approximate value of each article noted in cipher is a useful thing to refer to in case of any little disagreement or mistake; and a *very* useful thing for subsequent production, Miss Fanning, if the disagreement is carried into court, let us say. But it is not a thing that one can improvise at short notice in a room full of argumentative people."

Mrs. Grey arrived over night, and I did my best to make her comfortable. Mr. Laidlaw looked in during the evening and explained to her the course of procedure he proposed to follow. He was most sympathetic, and courteously invited her to a private view of the things that would be divided. "This may not be strictly regular, Madam, but I understand you are the eldest of your family, and it may be just as well for you to have some idea of what there

is to divide, that there may be as few regrets and after-thoughts as may be. This portrait is a Romney, and is worth all the rest of the pictures put together. This posset-cup dates from the Commonwealth; it is possibly not in modern taste, but would fetch three times as much as that Georgian salver, for instance. If the will permits you to select, you will naturally bear these little points in mind while making your selection; and I venture to call your attention to them this evening because I shall not be able to do so to-morrow."

So he ambled on, pausing occasionally to make sure that she was following him, gently helping the poor woman to come to some sort of judgement, for she was almost as ignorant as a child in such matters.

After he had left I did my best to impress his points upon her memory, making her out a little list, and so on; and, said I: "Whatever you choose, Mrs. Grey, stick to; remember your husband and children, and don't let the gentlemen persuade you out of your rights."

"You are speaking of my brothers, Miss Fanning!" she answered, with a spark of resentment that I liked her the better for. I said nothing but looked; her eyes fell and she smiled miserably. "You mustn't be hard upon them; we were left orphans in straitened circumstances, and their lives have been hard battles from the first. If they don't show much respect for their great-aunt's memory to-morrow you must just consider that there were times when she might have helped them and—didn't."

"And you," said I to myself, "how much of her help have you had, I wonder? And has not your life been a pinching time?" For she was little and stooped, and struck me as having lived poorly and sat late during her growing time; and I happened to

have heard that she had kept the home together and educated Mr. Thomas herself.

"Well, good-night, my dear," she said and offered me her thin, soft cheek. At her chamber-door she turned, her candle in her hand, and said: "You've been most kind to me; I'm sure you meant well, and,—perhaps I had better keep the list. I can't tell you how I dread to-morrow, and how I despise myself for having looked forward to it for—thirty years! Think of it,—that's what it means to be poor!"

The funeral went without a hitch; trust Mr. Laidlaw and me for that. The party was of the smallest; two coaches, the doctor's brougham, and a fly for the maids. The only person who showed the slightest feeling was poor Mrs. Grey; she had a heart, as I knew. Twice since I have kept house for Miss Barnwell the old lady has had serious attacks, and both times Mrs. Grey offered to come and help me in nursing her, but her great-aunt wouldn't hear of it.

On returning from the church tea was served in the dining-room. After his second cup the doctor caught Mr. Laidlaw's eye but found no encouragement and shook hands rather pensively.

The six of us were left.

Mr. Samuel, who had been fidgeting with his seals, cleared his throat in a rather authoritative fashion and began. "I suppose," said he, gradually lengthening his neck and narrowing his eyes. "I take it," he resumed, looking across at Mr. Laidlaw and then glancing at me. The lawyer raised his eyebrows and waited. Mr. Samuel spoke again. "There will be a little business to see to, Miss Fanning, family matters, you know, quite private and not likely to interest you, we think."

Mr. Thomas held the door open for

me. Knowing Mr. Laidlaw's intentions I did not rise. Mrs. Grey was holding my hand; there was no doubt as to her wishes in the matter, but none of her brothers ever thinks of considering Mrs. Grey.

"The executors naturally wish to be in privacy, Madam," said Mr. Albert, flushing and settling his double chin in his collar with a forefinger.

"The executor," interposed Mr. Laidlaw with gentle emphasis, "desires the presence and assistance of this lady."

"The *what* d'ye say?" shouted Mr. Albert, sitting back and tucking his heels under his chair and his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest—an attitude in which a stout man looks positively repulsive. There is only one male posture less becoming; I mean when they straddle with their backs to the fire. I wish they could see themselves; one cannot conceive a woman in either position.

"The *what*, my good fellow?" says Mr. Albert again, puffing and scowling.

Mr. Laidlaw drew the will from his pocket and flattened it out upon the table before him. "I am the late Miss Mary Amelia Barnwell's sole executor," he said.

"Pre-posterous!" snorted Mr. Albert.

"I protest!" said Mr. Samuel.

"Colourable, but perhaps we had better hear him read it," said Mr. Thomas.

"I think so, yes," murmured Mrs. Grey.

"To prevent disappointment," began the lawyer dryly, "you should know that the deceased, some fifteen years since, invested the bulk of her property in an annuity."

"The deuce she did," snapped out Mr. Albert.

"Hold your row, Al, will ye?"



snailed Mr. Samuel, giving me a vindictive little nod.

"Her real estate, this house and grounds," pursued the lawyer unmoved, "and her personalty, some six thousand pounds in consols, she leaves as follows: twenty-five guineas apiece to each of her two servants; five hundred pounds to myself, five hundred to Miss Fanning."

"I shall contest that last," remarked Mr. Samuel emphatically.

"—The residue in equal fourth shares to Mrs. Grey and you three gentlemen, or the survivor or survivors of you, contingencies which do not concern us. The plate, and certain articles which she calls *curios*, the selection of which she leaves to my sole discretion, she directs to be distributed immediately after her funeral among her relations aforesaid, each legatee choosing in turn in order of seniority. This, madam and gentlemen, is the sense of this document. If it please you, I will now read it verbatim."

"And we shall be none the wiser for that," growled Mr. Albert. "My brothers may do as they like, but, speakin' for myself, I shall want an office copy of that thing, and the best advice I can get upon it afterwards."

Mr. Albert's ill-humour was obvious, his brothers' hardly less so. I never met persons of their position who took so little pains to control or conceal their feelings. They glowered at one another, rubbing their chins, digesting their disappointment.

"Dead swindle," gulped Mr. Albert and pushed back his chair. They all rose.

"Pardon me a moment," interposed the solicitor. "In the will there is no mention of the testatrix's wearing apparel; but in this codicil, informally executed, in that the witnesses are not stated to have signed by request, nor in one another's presence, and cer-

tainly signed upon different dates,—in this codicil, I say, which Miss Fanning found yesterday and which I then saw for the first time, it being wholly in the late Miss Barnwell's handwriting,—by this codicil she devises the whole of her clothing to Mrs. Grey."

"What might it be worth?" asked Mr. Thomas cautiously.

"Possibly sixty pounds, sir."

"In-formal, you said?" observed Mr. Samuel, looking at his finger-tips.

"I said informal."

"I don't think we need discuss an informal—illegal document, eh?" He referred to his brothers. For once the three were agreed. "Isabel would not wish,—she *cannot* wish to press an illegal claim."

"But, Samuel, dear, what use would poor old auntie's frocks and,—and,—underclothing and things be to you bachelors?"

"Not the point, Isabel, not the point. They're not *yours*; d'ye see? If you want 'em you can buy them at a valuation, or auction; yes, auction will be best. D'ye hear, Laidlaw? We'll have no valuations. They offer a loophole, you know, they offer a loophole."

Mr. Laidlaw said nothing. He heard and saw a good deal that day which aroused his deepest repugnance, but preserved an unruffled composure through all. I never admired a man so much in my life. As for poor Mrs. Grey, she drew back into herself, quivering almost as if she had been struck. Her brothers never heeded her.

"Well, we're all agreed; next thing is to divide these knick-knacks. Where are they? In the library? I see you keep it locked."

"All in good time, Mr. Barnwell. There is a second codicil, as to the formality of which I believe there can be no question. In it you will re-

cognise the character and executive capacity of your deceased relative. My client foresaw that the division of such property as we are about to deal with might be beset with difficulties, and might even give rise to disputes, and she has appointed me sole arbitrator and referee in all such cases, whether my adjudication is sought or desired or not, adding,—” he paused and continued in low, clear tones—” that, if in my opinion,—*my* opinion, you will kindly observe—” any legatee shall object, obstruct, protest, reclaim, recriminate or make himself or herself disagreeable or offensive upon the occasion of this division, or shall refuse or delay upon the conclusion of this division to sign a declaration of full agreement and satisfaction before leaving this house, then he or she or they, the objector or objectors, shall at once and finally forfeit and forego all share in this division and—in the residue of the estate, and the decision shall proceed between the assenting and agreeable legatees as though he, or she, or they, the objectors, had never existed.”

Whether the men recognised their great-aunt's hand in these provisions or the hand of Mr. Laidlaw didn't much matter; what they did recognise was that they must submit to the solicitor or lose their legacies. Mr. Samuel looked wicked but said nothing. Mr. Albert gave a short laugh, and ground a bit of coal into the carpet, Mr. Thomas meanwhile regarding him covertly with an air of subdued expectation, measuring-up, as one might say, the limits of his brother's patience and temper with an eye to contingencies.

An attempt was made to shut me out of the library upon the pretence that I had heard all of the will that concerned me, but Mr. Laidlaw was firm. He said I had helped him with his lists and could put my hand on

each article; but he did not say, what he has told me since, that he had private and professional reasons for insisting upon my presence.

”It's pure intrusion,” blurted out Mr. Albert.

”’Tis not usual, Laidlaw, I must say; if you want help send for your clerk,” said Mr. Samuel.

”My clerk, sir, is in bed with influenza; but if I had ten clerks, and all were available, I should insist on doing my business in my own way. What is the nature of your objection to this lady is no concern of mine. You have shown it in my presence twice in the last few days, and you must pardon my observing that it does you but little credit. You and the other legatees have to thank Miss Fanning for many hours of hard and exacting work upon your account.”

Mr. Samuel was taken aback by the good little man's unexpected firmness. He had bitten into the peach forgetting the stone. Something was said about being obliged to me, which I did not over-value under the circumstances.

Into the library they trooped as soon as I turned the key; Mr. Samuel first, his sister last like a little shrinking grey mouse. Some minutes were given to silent inspection, and when the rest had taken their seats Mr. Thomas would still be sauntering off to look over and finger something again. I observed that these excursions were narrowly watched by his brothers, but it was only upon the second ”Sit down, Tom, will you?” that he joined the rest.

Then the scramble began. Mrs. Grey as eldest was bidden to choose first, and named her great-grand-mother's portrait.

”The Romney, begad, that's Isabel all over!” snarled Mr. Samuel. In fact there was such an outcry from

all three that the poor lady was reduced to tears and was ready to have renounced her right had not Mr. Laidlaw intervened; but her "selfishness" in "picking the eyes out of her aunt's sticks" was so harped upon that she lost what little nerve she had begun with, and was cajoled out of more than one good thing. Mr. Laidlaw did what he could to protect her but felt the difficulty (as he has told me since), of offering advice when at any moment he might have to use his power as arbitrator. I never saw such men for native hardness and coarseness. Mr. Samuel, for instance, was for removing his things to a side-table as soon as he had chosen them; at this rate the room was presently not big enough for the three, but he would have his way. He is a wonder to spread himself, the sort of man that wants both racks and all one side of a compartment for himself, his hat, and his newspaper.

They bickered about this, they bickered about every trifle, each in his own style, as unabashed as small badly brought-up boys, coming to the verge of a rupture twice. Mr. Albert, at length getting outrageous, drew upon himself a reminder of the terms of the codicil. Their mutual jealousy led to the breaking up of a set of Apostle spoons. Mr. Samuel, who fancies china, begged the one piece of blue hawthorn so shamelessly of his sister that his whispers aroused the suspicions of the rest, and Mr. Laidlaw's valuation being asked, there was an outcry, and the bowl being eventually put up to auction among them was knocked down to Mr. Samuel for forty-nine pounds ten shillings. The amazement, delight, and confusion of its rightful owner were almost laughable; the poor thing hardly liked to accept the cheque which her brother tossed surlily across the table.

Well, everything comes to an end

at last. We reached the rubbish; boxes of old letters, framed silhouettes in black, and faded daguerreotypes, the hoarded keepsakes of a century and a half of women's lives. Last of all was a leathern case which I had disinterred from the bottom of a box-ottoman full of flowered silks and stiff *moire antiques* and poplins, uncut materials in the very papers in which they came from Norwich a hundred years ago. The thing was octagonal, banded and hasped with tarnished metal, and might be fifteen inches across by five in depth. It contained nine largish, whiteish egg-shells, streaked and splashed with brown and black like ink-marks upon an old blotting-pad. I suppose there are people who can see the beauty of such things; I cannot. These were not glossy and handsome like ostrich eggs, but roughish to the finger and shaped like pears. They were packed in oakum and smelled faintly of a ship. Upon them lay three old love-letters, weak in the creases, faded and yellow, one written from Rike Awick and two from Conniesberg (wherever those lands may be) beginning *Darling Poll* and signed *Elijah*, a word which pretty nearly made me jump, but conveyed no meaning to the rest. With them lay a cutting from the KING'S WATERBEACH ADVERTISER for July 25th, 1830, telling of the loss with all hands of the brig NORTHERN TRADER of Boston off Sherringham, while on a voyage from Riga to Great Grimsby. Upon a paper pasted inside the lid was written in the formal sloping hand that our grandmothers learned in their seminaries *Penguins' Eggs, a Gift from E. G.*

That was all. I have described the things particularly, tediously, you may think, for reasons; but at the moment no one at the table looked twice at them. They were one more

bit of out-of-date family lumber, and the last ; so far we were in a way glad to see them, for some of us were cross and all were tired, and much packing had to be done yet, and time was running on.

"What's here?" said Mr. Samuel, whose turn it was. "Nothing worth the carriage." He sniffed the leather: "Russia ; held a fur cap once and will hold my spoons. Here, Isabel, these are more in your boys' line than mine, you shall have 'em for half-a-crown."

He roughly reversed the box, turning the contents upon the table-cloth. The egg-shells rolled hither and thither in rings, clicking and jostling. One went over the table's edge but was caught by Mr. Laidlaw.

"Penguin," he remarked abstractedly turning the thing in his hand in the light of the lamp, "who would have thought that a native of the southern hemisphere? But this is not—" He stopped abruptly, a quick flush mounting from his cheeks to his forehead.

The rest saw nothing of this, though Mr. Thomas, the selection over, was examining the books through the glazed doors of the cases and overheard something.

"There's an encyclopedia in here,—locked. Who has the key of this? Ah, thank you, Miss Fanning. Here, you are,—Penguin, a wingless seabird of the family *Sphen*—something or other ; extremely abundant in southern latitudes and so forth. No catch there, Sam. *By George!*" The last words were breathed softly. He replaced the volume, locked the case and returned me the key.

Mr. Laidlaw sitting with his back to the books must have seen something in the mirror upon the opposite wall. He rose, turned, glanced at a gap in the top shelf and overtaking Mr. Thomas, who was moving away,

tapped him lightly upon the breast, smiling straight into his eyes, a very firm smile. There was something which sounded hard beneath the coat.

"Miss Fanning, a moment if you please."

I was at his elbow ; still smiling he was holding Mr. Thomas by a button ; the man was white and frightened. Then I realised what had happened ; the rest packing their things with much tearing and crumpling of paper noticed nothing.

"I cannot permit this, sir. I doubt if I ought to condone it. That is a first edition of *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*."

"I—I'll pay—It—it was only to look at. I swear I meant,—but I'll pay," he muttered abjectly, rapidly, as thieves always do ; I've seen two or three caught in my time, and they all had plenty to say for themselves.

Mr. Laidlaw, still fast to his button, read him through in silence. "You will write me your cheque for this book, now, this very minute, for two hundred pounds, or—"

"Two? Monstrous! Say five-and-twenty!"

"—Leave the house under the forfeiture clause."

The culprit twisted. Mr. Laidlaw, still holding him, made a half-turn to the others and cleared his throat as if to speak.

"Don't! I'll pay!"

"Two hundred, you take me! No fencing, if you please ; it is your last chance.—Kindly take care of those eggs, Miss Fanning," he whispered as he led his captive to a writing-table, whence he presently returned still smiling, and remarked to me in an undertone: "There was just a suspicion of bounce in that, Miss Fanning, for you remember the books are excluded from the terms of the reference, and by my own action."

"Then you couldn't?"

"Precisely. I could not." His eyes twinkled with enjoyment, although his voice was so modulated that it would not have carried a yard. Then in his clear business pitch he said to Mr. Samuel: "Mrs. Grey takes these natural curiosities at your price, sir," with a swift warning glance at the lady who had not spoken: half-crowns were too scarce with her to spend lightly. He pushed the coin across the table to her brother and obtained his initials to a receipt. "Fussy? say formal, sir; mine is a formal profession. And now, my dear madam and gentlemen, I am about to verify with you the list of curios with the names of their new owners, to which list you will attach your signatures by way of receipt and in token of your agreement. You are then at liberty to remove your property as soon as you like. What remains here remains at its owner's risk, although Miss Fanning and I will take the usual precautions."

The men guarding their hoards looked at the lawyer, at me, and last at one another. Him they could trust, me they could trust, but one another?—No!

They took themselves off at last in cabs with their treasures stored in candle-boxes and hampers, and we two women with Mr. Laidlaw breathed more easily round a cosy little supper-table, very, very late but oh so welcome!

The lawyer (who eats as genteelly as a lady) said little until I dismissed the red-eyed, yawning maids to bed and undertook to close up myself. He looked white and must have felt tired, but with food and warmth some little pleasure in his success returned, and he began, so to say, to sparkle. He turned to Mrs. Grey: "Did you ever break the tenth commandment, madam?" said he.

The demand was not quite so startling as it looks, for the quivery little lady had already learnt to admire and to trust him. I am sure it never crossed her mind that he was joking, for she answered that she feared she must have done so at some time, and then, some painful memory recurring, "Oh often, often," says she; "I've lived for thirty years within sight of water and never, until this hour, have I had enough to drink!"

I laughed my loudest and patted her arm, for I feared a little scene, she was smiling so tremulously.

"But did you ever covet anything so suddenly, madam, and so strenuously, madam, that the temptation almost stopped your breath, and came within a measurable distance of overmastering your virtue?" He had ceased to balance his spoon, and his tone had grown so earnest that we looked upon him with a sudden growth of wonder. "Once have I been so tempted," he went on, "and only once. In the course of thirty years of family practice (an old connection of my father's before me, among some of the best people around here,) I have had my opportunities. Yes, we lawyers see singular things,—surprising lapses of memory, oversights, crass blunders,—I've seen several ripe pears that needed but one little touch to tumble into my mouth,—yes, into mine—I've seen derelict real estate which needed,—well, no more than a touch. These were such chances as have made a county family before now; but, I thank my Maker, ladies, that not only have I never succumbed to them, but that I cannot recollect ever being seriously tempted,—until this afternoon."

We sat bolt upright in our chairs. "Mr. Laidlaw,—you are making fun of us!"

"It was the atmosphere; I am

convinced of it. Possibly Miss Fanning is unsusceptible, but I—to me, ladies, the atmosphere of the library was most oppressive, almost mephitic, certainly infectious.”

“Dear, dear! but I would have opened a sash; why didn’t you speak?”

“That was it. I nearly had spoken,—nearly, not quite, *laus deo*,” he bent his head over his hands as for grace after meat. “Mr. Thomas Barnwell’s intervention saved me; I shall always think kindly of Mr. Thomas.” His eyes met mine and I learned two things, that this was my grave, precise little neighbour’s way of joking, and that I was to breathe no syllable about the adventures of John Bunyan.

“But what was it that took your fancy so? For I suppose that is what you are going to tell us. If it is anything of mine, dear Mr. Laidlaw, and I do hope it is, I am sure you are only too welcome to it. After the way you have advised and helped and,—and stood by me,”—her eyes began to fill—“I am sure I am only expressing the feelings of my husband and sons, Mr. Laidlaw.”

He raised deprecating hands in affected dismay. “Don’t try me too sorely, my dear lady; I am only human.” He tripped from the room smiling so brightly that I knew the temptation, if it had ever assailed him, had passed.

In a minute he was back again.

“These are what brought the blood to my head, ladies, these egg-shells. No, madam, pardon me a moment; I know what you are burning to say; that I am welcome to them all, that I paid for them with a certain half-crown of my own, and that in deed and truth you did not and do not want them, don’t know where to put them, or who would care for them, and that they are mine already,

—and all the rest of it.” Mrs. Grey had been breathlessly trying to assent to every word of this, but Mr. Laidlaw would not let her in, laughing her down with hearty enjoyment of what was yet to come. “Do you know?—But how should you know?—You do not know that these nine egg-shells are, next to the Romney, probably the most valuable property we distributed to-day. No, I am not joking, ladies; these are the eggs of the Great Auk, sometimes known as the northern penguin, a bird that has been extinct for more than half a century, and the egg, or rather the egg-shell of which is worth pretty nearly a hundred times its weight in gold.”

“Is—this—possible?” we asked in amazement.

“It is as certain as that I stand here. Ornithology is my hobby. I know the history and present possessor of every Great Auk’s egg in the world. I have seen and photographed most of them,—pretty nearly all indeed except the American specimens and those at Turin and Lisbon. I said I knew them all; good Lord! to think that for fifty years I have lived within five minutes’ walk of nine, nine, N—I—N—E absolutely unsuspected, undescribed, uncatalogued specimens!” He paused for breath, tossing up both hands and letting them fall to his sides, a figure of ecstatic surprise. “And such specimens! fairly well-blown, much better than most, clean, unhandled, unworn! Why, my dear madam, you are the possessor of property which, if you choose to keep it in your own hands, will make Wardlestone Parsonage a Mecca. Your drawing-room carpet will learn the foot-falls of every leading bird-man in Europe!”

“Mis-ter Laidlaw, whatever shall I do with the things?”

“Sell them, madam, sell them at once by auction at Stevens’s;—yes,



auction will be best," he murmured to himself with a little one-sided smile. "It will give me the greatest pleasure to make the needful arrangements. The worst of them, this pale one, is cheap at two hundred."

Mrs. Grey clasped her hands firmly to steady herself.

"These larger scrawly ones, with the interlacing pattern in Indian ink around their thicker ends, may fetch three hundred apiece. Nothing so good has been offered for thirty years at least. What this monster will make, heaven only knows! It is bigger, handsomer, and more curious than the hitherto unique specimen in the City of Liverpool Museum, the one which belonged to the Lord Derby's great-grandfather. Yes, there are three thousand guineas in this band-box. But,—I beg your pardon, my dear lady; compose yourself, I entreat! What *have* I said, Miss Fanning? Salts, salts, if you please!"

Poor Mrs. Grey lay doubled-up in her chair weeping aloud and without restraint. "To think,—to think," she sobbed, "and no later than last week I was beg—begging for a little loan, Mr. Laidlaw! My poor boy, Theodore,—you don't know him, a dear fellow, so clever, sure of his first-division honours, I'm told, possibly even a high wrangler-ship—had at last made up his mind to come down, was going to take his name off the books, to leave Cambridge, you know, in his second year, too! Oh, it was hard, but we could stand the expense no longer. And now—and now!" She wept again, and I felt like tears myself though Mr. Theodore is nothing to me. "But, Samuel, has he no claim? What *will* he say?" she added, dabbing her eyes nervously.

"You may take it from me, madam, that he has not the shadow of a claim in law or equity. If he is so ill-

advised as to prefer one, I beg you to refer him to me. As to what he will say; well, if we three keep counsel, I take it he will say nothing, this class of property being quite outside his experience. We will, with your permission, madam, dispose of them as the property of a lady, and put this Iceland letter into the auctioneer's hands to add a touch of—what shall we say?—local colour. You must know, ladies, that the Garefowl, Great Auk, or Penguin, (*pen*, signifying king or chief, and *guin*, crow, hence its Welsh name King of the Crows,) was at one time abundant upon the coast of Newfoundland and elsewhere up north, but was so persecuted by whalers during the breeding season that by the year 1829, when Mr. Elijah Gilbert, whoever he may have been, visited the place there was but one colony left, a reef off the coast of Iceland,—Eldey, I think. It was there that he took these eggs, which he presented to his lady-love, Miss Polly, whoever she may have been. Now the scientific interest of the situation centres in the fact that these nine must be positively the last eggs taken from this or any other locality, for the whole reef was submerged by an earthquake in the following spring, 1830. With these facts brought properly to the attention of the ornithological world I think we may count upon spirited competition for your property."

I listened to this with amazement. At that time I took no interest in natural curiosities; but this was a different matter, a fortune at the very least. To think how roughly Mr. Samuel had handled these valuable things turned me hot, and how I had saved one from bumping against the lamp-stand!

As for Mr. Laidlaw his excitement and delight were a pleasure to see. "Nine!" he crowed, rubbing his

hands palm to palm. "The Smithsonian will send a commission; foreign governments will compete; the Kaiser, our own people, Lord Mildenhall, Sir John Chieveley, Mr. Gawston-Dering,—oh, ho! I shall bid myself, but I shall stand no chance!"

He wagged his head with such comical self-commiseration that we women laughed in spite of ourselves, and one laugh leading to another the evening ended cheerfully, as I have known the evenings of other funerals to do.

Mr. Laidlaw's forecast was fulfilled almost to the letter. The sale took place in May and was quite an event; most of the London papers had leading articles about it. The thing touched the popular fancy, and, what was more to the purpose, the fancies of people with money to spend. The competition was very keen; an effort was made to secure the whole nine for the Cromwell Road Museum, but the ambition to get hold of the last set that would ever come into the market had seized the Americans, and a syndicate of New York millionaires bid up for them too for the Central Park Museum. Neither party had reckoned upon certain private collectors who went for the three especially handsome eggs regardless of cost. The records, as I heard Mr. Laidlaw say, were broken from the first lot.

The Romney made a deal of money, too; I had not the faintest idea all those years that I was living with such costly things in the house!

And poor Mr. Samuel did hear of it. The idea that those must have been his eggs dawned upon him the day after the sale. We heard that he almost had some kind of fit. They said that he cried like a child, and went on about that half-crown for four-and-twenty hours.

He got but little out of Mr. Laidlaw, and only silence from his sister. She is a good woman and a forgiving one, but his behaviour about that codicil had touched her to the quick. She said little, but she felt it, and it opened her eyes at last. I know, for I was paying her a visit at Wardlestone at the time, looking around and considering, for I had lost the only home I had, and after fifteen years in one place it is cold work moving on, and I had begun to fancy that at my time of life I was not everybody's choice as housekeeper or companion. But it does not do to give way to discouraging thoughts or one's manner suffers and then it is all up with one, so I put what face I could upon it and kept my advertisement in *THE DAILY TELEGRAPH*.

As for the Greys, it was the prettiest thing to see their almost childish enjoyment of their new means and the tiny little treats they allowed themselves, and their pleasure in being able to give. Goodness me! What pitiful little economies had become second nature to them, and how they laughed at one another for keeping them up, and unconsciously dropped into them again while they were laughing! I declare that the maids in Miss Barnwell's kitchen had lived better, far better, than these poor gentlefolks had lived.

The sons seemed fine, grave, thoughtful young fellows with the most beautiful manner towards their parents, and a kind of easy deferential entertaining way towards myself, which quite altered my opinion of young men from the University—not that I have ever come across one before, now I come to think of it. Mr. Theodore had done all that his mother had said, and better, something most unusually brilliant, I forget what, and had a nice appointment already.

I had received my legacy. Five hundred pounds sounds well, but twenty pounds a year is not enough to live upon. Mr. Laidlaw, when paying it over, had suggested an investment, and had acted for me most kindly and would charge me nothing; indeed he smiled at the suggestion. "Let me hear from you pretty frequently, Miss Fanning," he had said at parting, (he once addressed me as *my dear young lady*,) and had actually seen me off, although it is quite possible that he had other business at the station.

Not being quite a fool I had not allowed myself to dwell upon these trivialities, and was utterly surprised at finding him in Mrs. Grey's drawing-room one day when I came down for tea. He was in mourning for his sister whose death we had seen in

the paper two months before. He rose to his feet as nimbly as a young man, cup in hand, and greeted me cordially, his usual precise, twinkling, smiling manner just a little heightened by absence, possibly. It seemed he was down in Surrey on business. He spoke with some momentary hesitation. He had put up at the Davenant Arms; a comfortable house apparently.

Why had he not let us know he was coming? Ah, why indeed? He seemed nervously amused and perhaps a little at a loss upon this point.

At this moment Mrs. Grey heard her husband calling from the garden and left the room looking at me over her shoulder as she opened the door; such a curious look!

And yet I suspected nothing.

And then——!